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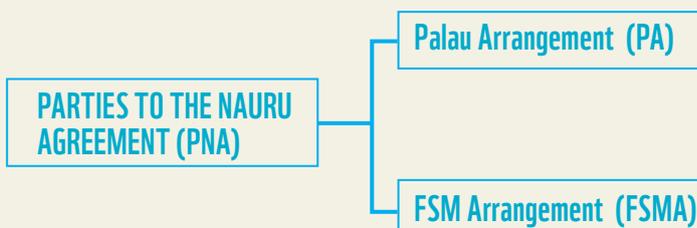
ENSURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PACIFIC TUNA

Palau & FSM Arrangements



“THE VESSEL DAY SCHEME GIVES THE PARTIES TO THE NAURU AGREEMENT CONTROL AND SECURED RIGHTS TO THE FISHERY” - DR. TRANSFORM AQORAU (PNA DIRECTOR)

Concerns about the expansion of the purse seine fishery led to the development of the Palau Arrangement in 1992 and the Federated States of Micronesia Arrangement for Regional Fisheries Access (FSM Arrangement) in 1994. These arrangements are administered by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement.



The Palau Arrangement

In the late 1980s, concerns over the near over-exploitation of the western and central Pacific yellowfin tuna stock led to the establishment of the Palau Arrangement. This raised the urgency for action to be taken to reduce tuna catches. The arrangement was later concluded in November, 1997 by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) excluding Tuvalu, restricting the number of purse seine vessels that could be licensed by the Parties to fishing in their waters. Currently, the limit stands at 205 vessels.

The arrangement underwent a review in the early 2000s after clear indications of its reduced efficacy. This led to the adoption of the Vessel Day Scheme in 2007 entailing the following recommendations:

- To replace the existing limit on the number of vessels by a limit on the number of ‘purse seine days’ allocated as national Total Allowable Efforts (TAEs), where a ‘purse seine day’ is any day that a purse-seiner is at sea while present in an EEZ of a Party.
- To allow for the transferability of ‘fishing days’ amongst Parties, allowing them to take advantage of migration of the fishery in the PNA waters.
- To increase competition among the purse seiners, allowing increased premium on access.

The FSM Arrangement for Regional Fisheries Access

It was signed on November 30, 1994 and came into force on September 23, 1995. It is a mechanism for domestic vessels of the PNA to access the fishing resources of other parties. This is to encourage greater employment, technology transfer and training of the coastal states. The concept behind the FSM Arrangement brings about the establishment of terms and conditions that allow Parties to grant preferential access to those vessels that provide long-term, sustainable and quantifiable economic benefits. It features the following objectives:

- Provide access for domestic vessels to Parties' waters on terms no less favourable than those granted to distant water fishing nations (DWFNs);
- Secure maximum sustainable economic benefits from tuna resources;
- Promote greater participation by nationals of Parties in fisheries and assist in development of national fisheries industries.

How VDS Works!

The PNA operates a Vessel Day Scheme to maintain the overall fishing effort in the PNA area within sustainable limits. Under the scheme, a total number of days are set for the PNA area, which can be divided and traded between the eight members. Each member state is given a Party Allowable Effort (PAE) of days: if they exhaust their fishing days, they must close the fishery and purchase fishing days from another country.

Latest update on VDS:

May, 2011 - The Solomon Islands is now the third PNA member to close its waters to purse seiners in accordance with the Vessel Day Scheme. The two other countries who have had a similar experience in the past are Papua New Guinea and Nauru who secured extra days from Palau and the Marshall Islands respectively.

Source: Solomon Times, 18 May 2011

Note

Tuvalu has signed, but not ratified the arrangement and has therefore agreed not to take action that might undermine it. Tuvalu is, however, a permanent observer on the Palau Arrangement.

Source: Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, FFA (2011)



For more information

Seremaia Tuqiri
stuqiri@wwfpacific.org.fj
 Patricia Mallam
pmallam@wwfpacific.org.fj
 Tel: + 679 331 5533



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