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From Eriko Hibi



Fisheries and aquaculture play a significant role in eliminating hunger, promoting health and reducing poverty and additional efforts must be put to safeguard coastal areas and to manage planet's oceans sustainably.

Our partnerships in fisheries has offered a rare opportunity for fishers from the Pacific to compare notes with counterparts in the Caribbean. Two articles this month highlight inter-regional cooperation in fisheries.

Also in this edition, we also cover the continuing efforts of FAO to increase contract farming potential in Fiji. Finally, we are pleased to announce a technical brief on issues which affecting family farming in the Pacific.

Enjoy the read

**Eriko Hibi**

FAO Subregional Coordinator for the Pacific Islands

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## Pacific and Caribbean fishers find common ground at sea

Fishers from the Pacific and Caribbean have had a rare opportunity to compare notes and nets, thanks to a study tour arranged by FAO and a regional counterpart in Caribbean island countries.

FAO, through its Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands, and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) have just completed the first phase of a Pacific-Caribbean Nearshore Fisherfolk Exchange – a 12-day study tour across three Caribbean island countries.

The study was an opportunity for Pacific Islands' fisherfolk and government fisheries officers to share experiences and knowledge with Caribbean fishers and to analyze practices utilizing Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), which are manufactured objects designed to attract fish.

Fishers and fisheries officers responsible for FAD programmes from Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu met their counterparts from the three Caribbean countries of Barbados, Dominica and Grenada on the fishing grounds, in the fishing communities and in government offices.

"It is not often fisherfolk get the opportunity to engage in dialogues with their brothers and sisters in other countries – even though these people are on the frontline of development and risk taking," said Jessica Sanders, FAO Fisheries Officer.

Fishing nearshore with FADs is gaining momentum in the Pacific region as a tool to enhance food security and income for fishers and communities, and to reduce pressure on lagoon and reef stocks. Evaluating how communities engage in FAD fishery development in other parts of the world, such as the Caribbean, can provide greater insights into opportunities associated with fisheries development, and most importantly, reduce risks associated with development.

"As much as possible, we aimed to hold our discussions in the fishing ports, beach landing sites and on the water where fisherfolk are most comfortable. The CRFM were instrumental in setting up these site visits and facilitating dialogues," said Sanders.

### **Oceans apart – common objectives**

Through mutual agreement, the team looked at strengths and weaknesses across issues such as safety at sea, FAD effectiveness, organization of fisherfolk, profitability of the fishery, and innovation in gear and boat use and design.

Visits began with fish markets and landing sites in Barbados and meetings with representatives of the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organizations, the gateway to those island countries with vibrant FAD fisheries and then on to Grenada and Dominica where they visited markets and landing sites, and held meetings with fishing associations to discuss local priorities and constraints as well as sharing fishing experiences at sea with local fishers.



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"The study tour was inspirational and all the participants benefitted greatly from these cross-regional discussions. The sharing of ideas in the use and management of nearshore FADs by those who use and depend on them for their livelihoods provides unique insights into practical improvements," Sanders said.

The information shared will be compiled to produce a publication detailing the characteristics and status of small-scale FAD fisheries in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The report will focus on fisheries management, fishing operations, the technology used, the engagement of fishers in decision-making, care of the catch, marketing and sale of products, data collection, as well as best practices for the fisheries.

The study tour was funded by FAO through the FAO Multi-partner Programme Support Mechanism (FMM) and was implemented in close partnership with CRFM.

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## FAO promotes contract farming in Fiji

The Government of Fiji and FAO are continuing their partnership to promote contract farming as a means to coordinate links between farmers and agribusiness firms.

A Contract Farming training workshop on – planning and implementing Contract Farming operations in Fiji– was held in Suva, Fiji. Fiji Crops and Livestock Council –FCLC provided logistic for this training workshop. FAO agribusiness value chains consultant Mr. Sherzad and FCLC Contract Farming experts jointly facilitated this workshop. FAO Agribusiness value chains Consultant, Shukrullah Sherzad said. "Contract farming is one of the proven mechanisms that can be promoted to improve efficiency and inclusiveness in transforming food and agriculture systems."



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In simple terms, contract farming is an agreement which establishes conditions between a buyer and farmers for the production and marketing of a farm product or products. Under contract farming, producers commit to the future delivery of farm products to a buyer under agreed specifications that can include prices, production technologies, among other mutually agreed conditions.

There has been significant progress in Fiji securing agreements between farmers and exporters. "A cocoa exporter agreed to buy from the cocoa farmers based on the developed criteria and template which was developed under the workshop." Said Sherzad.

In another case, an exporter of ginger has also agreed to sign contracts with ginger farmers to source approximately 1500 – 2000 tons of ginger a year. The exporter will also provide technical support under the contract agreement.

The Fiji Crop and Livestock Council (FCLC) agreed to establish a Contract Farming Working Committee to help facilitate between ginger farmers and agricultural exporter Kaiming Agro Processing Ltd.

Ginger processing company and exporter, Frespac Ginger (Fiji) Ltd also showed initial interest in facilitating contracts with farmers to provide more than 500 tons of ginger a year.

“Through FAO projects we aim to improve the capacity of farmers to market a consistent supply of safe, quality food. One of the outputs of this workshop was to facilitate improved farmer linkages to market through the adoption of contracts”. Sherzad explained.

FAO Sub regional office for the Pacific Islands has conducted ten contract farming training workshops over 2017 – 2018 as part of a regional project covering Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

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## Effective fish trade and sustainable development for Pacific SIDS

FAO recently conducted a workshop on Effective Fish Trade and Sustainable Development for Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDs).

This workshop, one the three SIDS Regional Fish Trade workshops, was held in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands and the government of New Zealand.

The 3-day intensive workshop brought together officials with responsibility for trade and fisheries from the region, to assist Pacific SIDS bridge knowledge gaps in relation to current global understanding of fish trade; reporting of the value of trade and assessment of opportunities and barriers to current and future trade. Importantly, it facilitated sharing of national and international experiences for the benefit of the region.

Dr Kim Friedman, who coordinated delivery of the workshop with FAO’s partners said, “Concentrating on getting fish trade right is critical to ensuring fisheries are profitable and sustainable. Discussing people’s involvement across the whole value chain highlights both the obligations and opportunities that markets offer in providing livelihoods and ultimately food security for the private and public sector involved in fisheries.”

Nearly 60 delegates participated in the interactive workshop, with delegates from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga; delegates from the Pacific Islands



Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), World Bank, the FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands, FAO Headquarters (Rome) and private sector delegates.

The Pacific Regional Workshop was delivered around a three pillar framework, tailored to the specific needs and demands of the participating countries and regional concerns i.e.

- Pillar One: Jointly defining a path for describing the value of fisheries, as required by the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (life below water), in this case SDG Target 14.7;
- Pillar Two: Informing SIDS on the international processes underway for achieving positive outcomes on fisheries subsidies, and
- Pillar Three: Presentation and discussion on a range of trade governance and regulatory framework issues, necessary for effective fish trade; WTO Agreements, Conventions implementing trade regulations (e.g. CITES provisions for threatened species), IUU related regulation, market access issues (including non-tariff measures) and actions that could facilitate access to trade, or serve as barriers to trade for SIDS.

Among the issues discussed at the workshop were the instruments of fisheries governance including relating to Catch Documentation Schemes (CDS), Port State Measure Agreement, access to trade information, WTO negotiations in regards to fisheries trade and subsidies, strengthening regional co-operation and opportunities for further supporting sustainable development in the fisheries sector.

These discussions reflected the fact that fish plays a major role in international trade, with the most recent reported figures showing that 60 million tonnes (live weight equivalent) of total fish and fish products are being exported annually. This represents a 514 percent increase over figures in the mid-1970s for trade in fish for human consumption.

During this same period, most recent figures show that fish trade also grew significantly in value terms, with exports rising from USD 8 billion in 1976 to USD 143 billion in 2016. These figures underestimate the real value of trade, as they do not include related values such as fisheries and aquaculture services (e.g. business and resource management, capital equipment operation and servicing, infrastructure construction and research), which were also part of the discussion during the 3-day workshop.

Growth in fish trade is also important to the economies in the Pacific Islands' fourteen independent countries and eight territories, both in terms of generating export earnings and in terms of imports. Fish trade is, and will continue to be, integral to the culture of Island communities, playing a major role in generating export earnings and providing food security and livelihoods for local communities.

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## FAO Publication: Family Farming in the Pacific Islands Countries

Agriculture in the Pacific Island Countries is largely dependent on family based small-scaled farms. Smallholder family farmers often have access to less than two hectares of land and depend on labour supplied by household members.

Despite their small size and limited input resources, family based small-scaled farmers play a vital role in producing food products for family and commercial consumption, employment creation, community development, improving food systems and, protecting the local tradition and rural landscape.



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This brief highlights shared issues affecting family farming in the Pacific. It also covers the challenges and opportunities to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

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