

## FISHERIES POLICY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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### Introduction

Fisheries Policy of Papua New Guinea in the 1980's was unclear for the Japanese because of the rejection of continuing Japanese participation in the skipjack fishery joint-ventures and fee fishing (MATSUDA, 1986, 1990). As a result, both Japan and Papua New Guinea lost great economic benefits. The objective of this paper is to clarify the position of Papua New Guinea in terms of fisheries policy.

### Fall of Fisheries

#### i) Domestic skipjack fishery

It appeared that world fisheries production potential had peaked at 70 million tons during the 1970's. However, the catch increased since the introduction of the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in 1977 to over 92 million tons in 1986 and this upward trend is continuing (Table 1).

During the 1970's, fisheries in Papua New Guinea greatly expanded, emphasizing skipjack fisheries joint-ventures as well as shrimp fisheries joint-ventures, though the industry experienced unexpectedly low catches in the early 1970's; oil crises in 1973 and 1978; bait problems and independence of Papua New Guinea from Australia in 1975; the establishment of the 200 mile Declared Fishing Zone (DFZ); an easement of the mercury content limit for imported tuna to the United States, and advance of large scale United States purse seiners into the South Pacific tuna and skipjack fisheries in 1978 (MATSUDA, 1986).

A fisheries joint-venture, New Guinea Marine Product Pty. Ltd. (Japanese partners: Hokoku Suisan, Nihon Suisan, and Itochu Shoji; base: Madang; year of establishment: 1971), withdrew their skipjack fishing operations in 1975 due to the depressed world economy and the establishment of prohibited areas for bait collection by local governments. Gollin Kyokuyo Niugini Pty. Ltd., another joint-venture (Japanese partner: Kyokuyo; base: Kavieng; year of establishment: 1970), discontinued their skipjack fishing operation in 1978 because of large debts due to a drastic decrease in skipjack export prices caused by the easement of the mercury content limit for imported tuna in the United States besides a rise of purchase prices of fish from Okinawan fishermen caused by yen appreciation.

Carpenter Kaigai (PNG) Pty. Ltd., another joint-venture (Japanese partner: Kaigai Gyogyo; base: Rabaul; year of establishment: 1972), renamed to New Britain Fishing Industry Pty. Ltd. in 1977, withdrew their skipjack fishing operations in 1982 due to the depressed world economy and tax problems at the renewal of the joint-venture agreement after 10 years of operation.

Table 1. Fisheries production in Papua New Guinea: 1970-1987\*<sup>1</sup>.

Year	World catch* <sup>2</sup>	Domestic catch* <sup>3</sup>				Foreign catch in DFZ* <sup>3</sup>			
	tons	Total tons	Tunas tons	Shrimp tons	Coastal sp. tons	Total tons	1000Kina	Japan tons	1000Kina
1970	70,325,000	23,400	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	n.a.	0
71	70,707,400	30,700	17,003	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	n.a.	0
72	66,121,000	27,100	13,124	n.a.	n.a.	17,900* <sup>4</sup>	0	15,000* <sup>4</sup>	0
73	66,807,900	45,300	28,332	463	n.a.	36,300* <sup>4</sup>	0	30,500* <sup>4</sup>	0
74	66,466,200	49,948	41,780	962	n.a.	63,000* <sup>4</sup>	0	60,600* <sup>4</sup>	0
75	66,376,300	34,673	17,398	434	n.a.	22,900* <sup>4</sup>	0	21,200* <sup>4</sup>	0
76	69,753,000	50,743	33,015	445	n.a.	16,900* <sup>4</sup>	0	15,000* <sup>4</sup>	0
77	68,914,000	26,351	24,411	529	n.a.	n.a.	0	n.a.	0
78	70,438,600	52,199	48,933	997	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
79	71,265,600	29,562	26,944	1,178	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
80	72,190,800	41,117	34,099	1,177	46.79	25,642	806	25,642	806
81	74,777,500	37,381	24,028	1,026	111.52	31,945	1,420	31,945	1,419
82	76,862,700	9,204	n.a.	890	76.36	67,165	2,866	66,046	2,379
83	77,597,500	7,041	n.a.	1,150	177.02	93,216	2,162	87,751	1,960
84	83,710,500	9,274	2,744	1,114	418.46	97,752	2,703	62,410	1,652
85	85,988,200	15,980	9,300	1,333	515.77	82,052	4,478	55,166	2,673
86	92,349,200	15,481* <sup>5</sup>	n.a.	1,321	611.26	n.a.	3,438	32,312	1,986
87	92,693,400	15,563* <sup>5</sup>	n.a.	1,165	533.11	n.a.	2,273	n.a.	308

Notes: \*<sup>1</sup>, n.a. stands for "not available"; \*<sup>5</sup> include a large amount of subsistence catch.

Sources: \*<sup>2</sup>, FAO, 1981; and 1988. Yearbook of fisheries statistics. 50; and 64.

\*<sup>3</sup>, UNDP, 1989. Fishery sector review: Papua New Guinea final report.

\*<sup>4</sup>, KEARNEY, 1979; and KLAWE, 1979.

Star-Kist Papua New Guinea Pty. Ltd. (an American company; base: Rabaul; year of establishment: 1972) also discontinued its tuna transshipment operation in 1982 due to a rise in fixed costs caused by taxes associated with fuel consumption and export, and a rise in purchase prices of fish.

In 1982, the industrial skipjack fishery in Papua New Guinea terminated, resulting in a great loss to the national economy. Papua New Guinea lost an export industry with an annual income of about 2% of GNP, foreign exchange earnings of 20,200 thousand Kina equivalent to about 3% of total export earnings, tax revenues of 2-3 million Kina, bait royalties of 440 thousand Kina, local employment of 1,257 people, and related purchases of about 10 million Kina. With many crews, Okinawan fishing vessels, employed by the fisheries companies in Papua New Guinea, also lost their jobs. As a result, Papua New Guinea Tuna Fisheries Pty. Ltd., a new skipjack fishing joint-venture (Japanese partner: Okinawan fishermen; base: Kavieng), was established in April 1984, but operations again ceased in December 1985 and have not resumed.

## ii) Foreign licensed fishery in the DFZ

Vessels of distant water fishing nations, primarily from Japan, but more recently from Korea, Taiwan, the United States and other countries have been operating in the DFZ (UNDP, 1989). See Tables 1 and 2. These were initially longliners, seeking for yellowfin and bigeye

Table 2. License fees paid by foreign vessels: 1980–1987 ('000 Kina).

Country	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Japan	806	1,419	2,379	1,960	1,652	2,673	1,986	309
U.S.A.	–	–	448	36	625	808	464	297
Taiwan	–	–	–	37	175	292	341	578
Korea	–	–	39	163	176	292	365	731
Philippines	–	–	–	–	44	74	–	227
Honduras	–	1.5	–	–	31	–	–	–
Cayman Is.	–	–	–	–	–	146	71	36
Panama	–	–	–	–	–	193	110	–
Indonesia	–	–	–	–	–	–	101	95
Total	806	1,420	2,866	2,162*	2,703	4,478	3,438	2,273

Note: \* includes others (unspecified) of 15,000 Kina.

Source: UNDP, 1989. Fisheries sector review: Papua New Guinea final report.

tuna, and skipjack pole-and-line vessels. With the rapid development of purse seining techniques suitable for the western equatorial Pacific in the late 1970's, purse seine vessels began taking significant catches in the DFZ in the 1980's and these vessels now dominate the fishery.

Prior to the formal declaration of the Papua New Guinea's DFZ in March 1978, Japanese vessels operated in these waters. After early difficulties in negotiating a government to government agreement, vessels were licensed to fish in the DFZ on a lump sum payment arrangement with the Federations of Fisheries Cooperative Associations. An agreement was however concluded in August 1981, and vessels were licenced on a trip basis, the fee being based on an estimated 5% of FOB value of the catch. This agreement remained in force until March 1987, when efforts by Papua New Guinea to increase access fees and base them on CIF prices proved unacceptable to the Japanese fishermen. Currently no Japanese vessel is operating in the DFZ.

The overall number of vessels licensed to fish in the DFZ has declined, mainly due to the exclusion of the Japanese fishing activity, though the number of purse seiners from Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and the United States of America are increasing.

### A Defense of the Past Fishery Policy

The Minister and Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources (DFMR) are governed and/or administered by the following Acts and Regulations: Continental Shelf (Living Natural Resources) Act (Chapter 210), Fisheries Act (Chapter 214), Fisheries (Torres Strait Protected Zone) Act 1983, Tuna Resource Management Act (Chapter 224), Whaling Act (Chapter 225), Fisheries (Processors) Act 1982, Local Government Act (Chapter 57)–S91 only, Native Customs Recognition Act–S5(b), Fish Export Regulations, pursuant to the Customs Act (Chapter 101), and National Seas Act. International aspects of fisheries are also governed by the Nauru Agreement, Multilateral Fisheries Treaty with the United States, other subsidiary agreements with Taiwan, Korea, the Philippine, and Indonesia (UNDP, 1989). For joint-venture activities, the National Investment and Development Authority (NIDA) Act, emphasizing a nationalization policy, is critical (MURAMOTO, 1989).

Papua New Guinea is an active member of all regional agencies which deal with fisheries matters. These include the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the South Pacific Commision (SPC),

and the United Nations. Papua New Guinea also receives assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Centre for Living Aquatic Resource Management (ICLARM), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation (OFCF) besides Australian linkages. As an ACP (African Caribbean Pacific) country, Papua New Guinea is also granted duty-free access to EEC markets under the provisions of the Lome Convention.

Regarding internal linkages, the relationship between the National Government and 19 provincial governments is determined largely by the National Government within the bounds set by the Constitution and the Organic Laws in which fishing and fisheries are defined as a "concurrent subject" (UNDP, 1989).

Thus, an overall framework exists, but there were rooms for misunderstandings between the National Government and provincial governments due to distance and differences in interest (TAKE, 1989), differences between traditional custom and western laws on which the modern legal framework is based (WEARNE, 1989), difficulties in finding local representatives for the Bait Royalty Associations (TAKE, 1989), development of distrust feelings among joint-venture partners and hasty political pressures (WEARNE, 1989), development of the Multilateral Fishing Treaty with the United States, and too high of expectations to the Japanese counterparts. Besides, local losses at provincial levels have been absorbed by the island communities concerned.

### Current Fishery Policy

In 1988, the Government made a formal request to UNDP for reviewing the fisheries sector of Papua New Guinea. The report was completed in January 1989 (UNDP, 1989). Based on the findings, the Fisheries Subsector in the Medium Term Strategy 1990–1994 was prepared (DFMR, 1989). The current fishery policy is based on this.

Priorities are given to the following areas: 1) of providing self employment to small holder fishermen and formal employment in both government and private sectors, 2) investing public sector resources in economically viable fisheries activities which will lead to expansion of export and import substitutes, 3) building up and strengthening of the Department's institutional capability in areas of the fisheries extension, planning, training, and research, 4) monitoring of investment projects which will foster economic growth and contribute to achieving the above mentioned objectives, and 5) promoting commercial investment and reviewing incentives to investors.

Due to the large reduction of the contribution made by fisheries to the GDP in the 1980's, budgets to fisheries institutions, both administrative and educational ones, have decreased. Therefore, fisheries administrative activities at present are quite limited. Nevertheless, expectations to develop a skipjack joint-venture and a cannery are very strong, in particular, in Kavieng, New Ireland Province. After the withdrawal of Japanese skipjack joint-ventures, the Government requested the research on customary land ownership to the IASER (PNG Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research). As a result, A Sociological Investigation of Major Baitfish Areas in Papua New Guinea was published (WALTER et al, 1986). Further studies on these matters have been conducted ever since.

Since 1989, 3–4 million kina of fishing fees each year will be received from the United States under the Multilateral Treaty with the United States. In addition, some progress will be

expected in fisheries negotiations with Japan in the near future.

### Policy Implications to the South Pacific

The fisheries experiences in Papua New Guinea represent a management difficulty in a country in transition from traditional society to modern society. Foreign factors should be introduced in a careful way in which conflicts are avoided. Thorough communication among interest groups are essential for success.

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