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Development Reform

1. Fostering sustainable fisheries management including supporting small-scale fishers.

This theme addresses the governance, regulation and support mechanisms needed for both industrial and small-scale fisheries. It encompasses catch management systems, monitoring and enforcement frameworks, and the development of sustainable fishing practices that can support long-term food security and economic benefits.

Additional areas for consideration, as raised through the UN's stakeholder consultation on panel themes, may include community-based co-management systems, enhanced access to technology and markets for small-scale fishers, and frameworks for integrating local fishers into decision-making processes.

Pacific Context

The Pacific fisheries sector operates across multiple scales, from large-scale industrial offshore fishing to small-scale commercial and subsistence coastal fisheries. The industry represents a cornerstone of regional economic security and cultural identity, providing significant government revenue, whilst also supporting the livelihoods and traditional practices of thousands of small-scale fishers.

The industrial offshore fishing sector is dominated by the world's largest tuna fishery, providing nearly 58% of global supply and can account for up to 98% of some nation's government revenue¹. While regional participation in the tuna industry shows strong growth, with Pacific Island fleets increasing their share of tuna catch value from 39% in 2014 to 56% in 2022, significant challenges to local control remain². Despite employing over 27,800 people, with onshore processing accounting for 65% of jobs, 90% of tuna catches are still exported outside the region and regional fleets account for less than one-third of total catch^{2,3}. The presence of approximately 740 foreign-based fishing vessels in Pacific waters and increasing high seas tuna catches, which have grown from 10% to 15% of total catch between 2022-2023, pose challenges to maximising local economic benefits⁴. However, it is important to note that the license fees paid by these vessels to Pacific Island countries are substantial and, in some cases, represent a major source of government revenue⁵.

Commercial and subsistence coastal fisheries provide substantial contributions to the GDP of Pacific nations, with coastal catch adding nearly USD 450 million value in 2024⁶. These fisheries also employ around 100,000 people, engaging 10-20 times more individuals than commercial offshore fisheries⁷. To sustainably manage these economically important fisheries, the region has increasingly adopted community-based approaches, with 661

active management sites now serving over 1,000 communities across 15 Pacific Island Countries and Territories³.

These management efforts face growing challenges across all fisheries sectors. Environmental factors such as climate change, ocean acidification, and marine pollution threaten the health of coastal ecosystems, while overlapping issues—including deep-sea mining, tourism development, and governance of areas beyond national jurisdiction—add layers of complexity. Compounding these challenges are systemic gaps in data collection and reporting, outdated policies and regulations, insufficient funding for key programs, and limited access to essential infrastructure like cold storage and landing sites⁸.

Regional Instruments

- [2015 - 2024 Melanesian Spearhead Group roadmap for inshore fisheries management and sustainable development](#)
- [2015 Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries](#)
- [Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-Based Fisheries Management \(CBFM\) 2021-2025](#)
- [2015 "New Song for Coastal Fisheries" \(Noumea Strategy\)](#)
- [2023 East New Britain Initiative \(ENBi\)](#) - strengthens FFA framework for collective tuna resource management and investment
- [2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent](#)
- [Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy](#)
- [Framework for Pacific Oceanscape](#)
- [2024 Apia Commonwealth Ocean Declaration](#)

International Instruments

- [WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies](#) - ratified by Fiji
- [2016 Agreement on Port State Measures \(PSMA\)](#) - ratified by Fiji, Marshall Islands, PNG, Vanuatu and Tonga

The Ocean Action panels at UNOC3 are collaborative, multi-stakeholder sessions designed to:

- Generate concrete commitments and actions to support SDG14 implementation
- Produce specific outcomes that will be captured in the "Nice Ocean Action Plan"
- Contribute to the Conference's overarching theme of "Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean"
- Foster partnerships between governments, civil society, private sector, and other stakeholders

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