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Subsistence and commercial fisheries are critically important for all Pacific island countries. Subsistence fisheries provide a source of food for most island communities while commercial fisheries provide governments with an avenue for promoting socio-economic development. In fact in many of the smaller and more isolated Pacific island countries—particularly those consisting of atolls—the commercialization of fisheries is one of few options that these countries have available for development.

Of special importance to all Pacific island countries is the extensive tuna resources found within the region. In 1984, it was estimated that 630,000 metric tons of tuna, or about 35 percent of total world catches, was taken in the Pacific islands region. The region’s tuna fishery is exploited by vessels based at ports in the region and by distant-water fishing vessels based at foreign ports. Distant-water fishing fleets from more than 10 countries now fish for tuna in the region.

The last 10 years has been characterized by many regional and international changes that have directly affected Pacific island countries with respect to the development and management of their tuna resources. These changes have in turn affected the benefits that these countries receive from their tuna fisheries.
In the late 1970s most Pacific island countries declared 200 mile zones. These declarations gave countries control over large tracts of the central and western Pacific Ocean. American Samoa and Guam declared exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in 1977, Northern Marianas in 1978, and the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau in 1979. Prior to extended jurisdiction these tracts of ocean were considered high-seas and freely available to any distant-water fleet that wanted to fish them.

With the increased management and development responsibilities associated with the declaration of 200 mile zones, self-governing and independent Pacific island countries joined forces in 1979 to formally establish the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA). The Agency's headquarters is located in Solomon Islands. Fifteen island countries are members of the Agency including the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau. The functions of the Agency are primarily to coordinate and harmonize fisheries' policies of member countries and to facilitate fisheries development throughout the region. Since 1980 the FFA has played an important role since 1980 in assisting all Pacific island countries in their fisheries access negotiations with distant-water fishing nations.

In 1981, the world tuna industry went into recession and as a result major structural changes in the industry have occurred. The full impact of the recession was felt in the Pacific islands and several countries have suffered. Over the 1970s Papua New Guinea had a robust pole-and-line domestic tuna industry but it collapsed at the end of 1981. The industry was the countries sixth most important export earner. Similarly, Palau lost its tuna industry in 1982. Palau's industry consisted of a fleet of pole-and-line vessels and an onshore freezer. Owing to the termination of the tuna industries in Papua New Guinea and Palau, approximately 1,200
Papua New Guineans and 100 Paluans lost their jobs.

Other domestic tuna industries in the Pacific islands—particularly those in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu—have been adversely affected by the downturn in the world tuna market. Nonetheless, Solomon Islands is doubling the country’s cannery capacity in 1986 to 10,000 metric tons of tuna per year.

In 1984, notable changes took place with the tuna industry in American Samoa. The two canneries operating in the territory—Starkist and Van Camp—significantly expanded their processing capacities. This was primarily due to the closure of their canneries on the U.S. west coast. The American Samoa canneries now have a processing capacity of 140,000 metric tons of tuna per annum. The tuna industry is the territory’s principal economic activity providing work for several thousand Samoans and contributing more than 90 percent to the territory’s export income.

The tuna industry in Hawaii was not spared. The industry suffered a setback in 1984 with the closure of the State’s only cannery. The closure was directly related to international events in the industry. However, despite the generally depressed state of the tuna market, the Marshall Islands have successfully established a katsuobushi (smoked tuna) processing facility in 1985. Katsuobushi produced at the plant is exported to Japanese markets.

Distant-water tuna fishing fleets have operated in the Pacific islands region since the end of World War II. But in the mid-1970s increasing attention from distant-water purse-seine fleets meant that the tuna fishery in the central and western Pacific became the focus of considerable international interest. Following the lead of the Japanese, purse-seine fleets from the United States, Korea and Taiwan entered the tuna fishery in 3

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the region. The purse-seine fleets mainly target on the EEZ of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, the Marshall Islands and Kiribati. In recent years, up to 115 purse-seiners have operated in the region. Catches made by some of these vessels are off-loaded in Japan and American Samoa for processing while other catches are transshipped at Guam and Tinian for transportation to canneries in American Samoa or Puerto Rico. Prior to 1984, a large proportion of the catches made by the distant-water purse-seine and pole-and-line fleets operating in the Pacific islands were transshipped to canneries on the U.S. west coast.

Several distant-water fishing nations have agreements with Pacific island countries providing access to the tuna resources in their respective EEZs. Since 1984 the United States Government has been involved in a series of complicated negotiations with Pacific island countries to conclude a multilateral agreement for the U.S. purse-seine fleet. Fisheries research related to management and development has been undertaken by a variety of organizations in the Pacific islands over the past 10 years. U.S. organizations such as the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council, the Pacific Basin Development Council, the National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Fisheries Development Foundation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Departments of Commerce and State have been active in the U.S. flag and Micronesian states. Other organizations such as the South Pacific Commission (Noumea) and the FAO-UNDP (Fiji) have supported and undertaken research throughout the entire Pacific islands region. In addition, USAID in response to a directive from the U.S. Secretary of State in 1985, is establishing a fisheries development program to assist Pacific island countries in the development and management of their fisheries resources. Over the next 4
years USAID will contribute $6.4 million to the program. The program will be administered by USAID's Fiji office.

The past ten years has witnessed a great number of fisheries changes in the Pacific islands region. Although the road ahead is not going to be an easy one, with continued support from countries and organizations within and outside the region and through cooperation with distant-water fishing nations, the next 10 years should be marked by fishing industry developments that will contribute to the socio-economic improvement of all Pacific island countries.
THE EAST-WEST CENTER is a public, nonprofit educational institution with an international board of governors. Some 2,000 research fellows, graduate students, and professionals in business and government each year work with the Center's international staff in cooperative study, training, and research. They examine major issues related to population, resources and development, the environment, culture, and communication in Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. The Center was established in 1960 by the United States Congress, which provides principal funding. Support also comes from more than 20 Asian and Pacific governments, as well as private agencies and corporations.

Situated on 21 acres adjacent to the University of Hawaii's Manoa Campus, the Center's facilities include a 300-room office building housing research and administrative offices for an international staff of 250, three residence halls for participants, and a conference center with meeting rooms equipped to provide simultaneous translation and a complete range of audiovisual services.
PACIFIC ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) at the East-West Center helps meet the special development needs of the Pacific islands region through cooperative research, education, and training. PIDP also serves as the Secretariat for the Pacific Islands Conference, a heads of government organization involving leaders from throughout the Pacific region, and for the Pacific Islands Conference Standing Committee, which was established to ensure follow-up on development problems discussed at the 1980 Conference.

PIDP's research, education, and training activities are developed as a direct response to requests from the Standing Committee. PIDP's projects are planned in close cooperation with the Committee to ensure that the focus and the organization of each project address the needs identified by the heads of government on the Committee, a process which is unique within the East-West Center and in other research and educational organizations serving the Pacific.

A major objective of the program has been to provide quality in-depth analytical studies on specific priority issues as identified by the Pacific island leaders and people. The aim is to provide leaders with detailed information and alternative strategies on policy issues. Each island country will make its own decision based on national goals and objectives. Since 1980, PIDP has been given the task of research in eight project areas: energy, disaster preparedness, aquaculture, government and administrative systems, nuclear waste disposal, business ventures development and management, roles of multinational corporations, and regional cooperation.