

Proposal to the 8th meeting for the establishment of South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation submitted by the Cook Islands

NORTHERN BOUNDARY

The following proposal on the Convention area northern boundary is submitted by the Cook Islands, for consideration at the 8th meeting of the consultations to establish the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (the SPRFMO) in Auckland, New Zealand during 8-14 November 2009.

The following proposal on the Convention area northern boundary was agreed by FFA members participating in a workshop funded by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), held in Nadi, Fiji on 20-23 October 2009. Participants in the Nadi workshop considered a number of options for determination of the northern boundary of the Convention area of application.

This proposal suggests determination of the northern boundary at 20°N latitude to encompass the high seas region of the Western Tropical Pacific Islands Area (WTPIA), including the high seas enclaves and the high seas areas beyond national jurisdictions to the north of Palau, FSM, Marshall Islands and Kiribati, except the westernmost high seas enclave situated north of Palau and FSM and east of the Philippines. Once the northern boundary reaches the eastern edge of the Line Islands of Kiribati's EEZ at the 150° meridian of west longitude (or further east as participants agree), the boundary would be redirected south to meet the equator and then run eastward towards the South American States.

Note that FFA members support the variations to the northern boundary proposed in the far eastern Pacific region adjacent to the South American States (contained in revision 6 of the draft Convention; Article 5(1)(c) and (d)).

Refer to the map at **Attachment A**.

The main objectives of this northern boundary proposal are:

- To ensure that the SPRFMO Convention adequately covers the WTPIA and that no gaps are left in the coverage of the high seas areas adjacent to the national waters of FFA members in the region.
- It avoids the geo-political complexities and unresolved boundary disputes that exist in the far western Pacific.
- The area of proposed inclusion is of significant importance for all FFA members due to the connectivity between all fisheries resources (including the highly and non-highly migratory resources) and ecosystems in the region.
- A single international agreement covering the proposed area will limit the financial and administrative burden placed on the small island developing states (SIDS) members of FFA, in the region.
- A single international agreement covering the WTPIA will lead to a consistent approach to the conservation and management of the fisheries resources and ecosystems in the WTPIA.

- The north western Pacific Agreement is understood to have determined a southern boundary at 20°N, which would as a result, leave a gap in this area of the Pacific.
- As the fishing activities become more regulated in the northern and southern Pacific, through adoption of international agreements, any gaps in between will attract IUU fishing activities.

I would be grateful if the attached proposal could be circulated to all participants attending the 8th meeting of the SPRFMO consultations, for due consideration.

Yours sincerely

Michael Mitchell
Head of Delegation
Cook Islands

Attachment A: Map of the proposed northern boundary for the SPRFMO Convention area of application.

