Attachment 3

Australia’s assistance to SIDS and territories

Response to WCPFC 2018 Annual Report Part 2, Questions 078-085

The Annual Report Part 2 questions 078-085, relating to requirements to assist SIDS and Territories (CMM 2013-6 and CMM 2013-07), are covered by this response.

Australia’s support to the region (encompassing assistance and capacity development to SIDS and Territories)

Australia’s aid program, administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), continues to support the development aspirations of Pacific island countries and the importance of fisheries to economic growth and food security in the region.

Australia provides core funding to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) (AUD5 million per year) to help Pacific Island countries manage and monitor fishing fleets; and the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division (FAME) of the Pacific Community (AUD2.4 million per year for its fisheries division) to provide scientific information and support for fisheries management. In 2019, Australia will provide an additional AUD1 million over two years to FAME to support the transition to annual Heads of Fisheries meetings on coastal and aquaculture fisheries.

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is implementing the second phase of a Community Based Fisheries Management initiative to promote the sustainable use of coastal resources. This is a DFAT-funded AUD6 million (plus AUD2 million from ACIAR) project over four years with the aim of scaling out first phase achievements, aligned with implementation of the Pacific’s New Song for Coastal Fisheries.

In June 2019, Australia announced that it would fund a new project with the Pacific Community to explore ways that we can work with Pacific island countries to safeguard their maritime zones in the face of climate change impacts, such as sea level rise. This project will further develop the scientific evidence base to enable Pacific island countries to make informed decisions to respond to climate change impacts on the integrity of their maritime zones. The project is in addition to ongoing assistance through Geoscience Australia and the Attorney General’s Department, to provide legal and technical support to Pacific island countries to delineate their maritime boundaries and deposit them with the UN and brings Australia’s total investment in maritime boundaries to $8.5 million over the period from 2014 to 2023.

Australia supports the Pacific to advocate for the sustainable development, management and conservation of the ocean and its resources (AUD1.38 million co-funding with New Zealand for the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner to support regional advocacy and coordination on climate and ocean issues).

Through the FFA, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority and the Attorney General’s Department, Australia is providing legal and operational support for Pacific island countries to ratify and implement the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Arrangement (NTSA) to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (AUD4.4. million, 2017-21).

Australia continues to implement the *Pacific Maritime Security Program* (PMSP) as a centrepiece of our defence engagement in the Pacific. The PMSP provides Australian Government funded capabilities to Pacific nations as sovereign assets to enhance their capacity to provide protection and surveillance of their own resources. The PMSP includes gifted patrol boats, operational funding support and funded civilian aerial surveillance at an overall program cost of AU$2 billion over 30 years. Construction of the replacement patrol boats commenced in 2018 and will roll out through to 2023. The aerial surveillance program and associated regional coordination components are also underway. The implementation of the PMSP will make a significant contribution to developing the capacity of SIDS to manage and conserve fisheries resources, including through supporting the regional implementation of the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement.

Implementation of the CMM on special requirements of SIDS and Territories

Australia supports the issue of disproportionate burden on SIDS and Territories becoming a standard part of all Commission discussions though we note with concern that some proposals considered at previous WCPFC meetings did not include an assessment of the proposal under CMM2013-06. Australia encourages all CCMs to continue to rigorously apply the checklist to proposals, and further encourages CCMs to engage with FFA on these issues.

Australia was pleased to chair the Special Requirements Fund (SRF) Intersessional Working Group, the work of which resulted in the adoption of a Strategic Investment Plan by the WCPFC in 2018. The SIP identifies potential sources of funding to address the identified capacity needs SIDS and Territories. Australia will continue to work with SIDS and Territories through the above-listed programs, and through other fora such as the FFA MCS Working Group, to assist SIDS and Territories with capacity development.