



### **Tuna Commission membership grows**

*Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.* The United States of America deposited its instrument of ratification of the Convention establishing the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission last Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> June. Mr Andrew Wright, Executive Director of the Commission, in welcoming the ratification by the United States, said “The participation of the United States as a full member of the Commission simultaneously provides for the full involvement of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam in the work of the Commission. Given the importance of tuna to the US territories in the Pacific all three will now have an opportunity to actively engage in the efforts of the Commission to provide a sustainable future for the tuna industry in the region”. The Commission, which is based in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia now has 30 members. The Commission’s primary responsibility is to support a consultative framework for cooperation on the sustainable use and long term conservation of the region’s globally valuable tuna resources. Mr Wright said “The reported catch of tunas from this region in 2005 was 2.15 million tonnes which was a record”. He expected that to have been exceeded in 2006 – the Commission is still working on the compilation of all the data for that year. Mr Wright added that, while this is the reported harvest, fish taken illegally or which is unreported to the Commission may add an additional 10% to that figure. This is a major concern as such activities seriously undermine the efforts of the Commission to establish a long term sustainable level of harvest. *Ends*