



PRESS RELEASE

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Tuna headquarters opens while representatives of 33 member countries visit Pohnpei

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia: For five days from Thursday 27 October 2007 participants from member countries of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) met at the Commission's headquarters, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia in a meeting of its Technical and Compliance Committee to discuss practical ways to better conserve and manage the region's rich tuna stocks. Taking advantage of the visit to Pohnpei by the members of the Commission the Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia, Hon. Alik L. Alik, formally opened the new headquarters building of the Commission in Kolonia.

The WCPFC Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) meeting's primary task is to provide advice and recommendations on compliance issues in WCPO tuna fisheries to the WCPFC Commission that will next meet at Guam from 3-7 December 2007. The TCC has now met three times since the Commission commenced operations in July 2005.

At the Pohnpei meeting, the TCC agreed on operational elements to support procedures for high seas boarding and inspection of fishing vessels, and considered action that might be taken against fishing vessels alleged to have undertaken illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing activities in the region. In pursuit of its goal of developing a comprehensive suite of fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) tools to safeguard regional tuna stocks, the TCC meeting also supported the further development of a satellite-based fishing vessel monitoring system (VMS) for the region's high seas, due to be activated on 1 January 2008. Some progress was made on arrangements for a regional observer programme for the region's high seas and the development of measures governing the transshipment of fish. The Commission meeting in December will also consider TCC advice and recommendations to mitigate the effect of tuna fishing on sea turtles, seabirds and juvenile tuna. *Ends*