

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Fishing Vessel Monitoring in the High Seas of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean starts operation on schedule**

As of 1 April 2009 the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) based at Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia began monitoring high seas positions of fishing vessels authorized to fish for highly migratory fish stocks in the WCPFC Convention Area, in support of the conservation and management of these valuable, mainly tuna, stocks.

The 5th Regular Session of the Commission (WCPFC5) held at Busan, Korea in December 2008 approved the standards, specifications and procedures for the operation of the Commission's near-real time, satellite-based vessel monitoring system (Commission VMS).

The Commission VMS will use the Pacific VMS infrastructure managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) which also supports a VMS for FFA members in their national waters. WCPFC5 endorsed a Service Level Agreement between the WCPFC and FFA regarding the FFA's support of the Commission VMS.

The Pacific VMS is an open architecture, integrated service that utilizes FFA-owned IT VMS infrastructure, software and services. It consists of the Sydney, Australia-based co-location services under an FFA contract with Macquarie Telecom Data Centre.

The vessel position reporting to the Commission VMS will vary from hourly to four-hourly intervals. Two hundred and eighty (280) fishing vessels were monitored in the high seas of the Convention Area on the activation date. It is expected that up to 2,000 fishing vessels will be reporting to the system by early 2010.