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## LAW OF THE SEA

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION: ENVIRONMENTLetter dated 28 November 1989 from the Permanent Representative  
of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General

On behalf of the seven South Pacific Forum countries that are also Members of the United Nations, namely, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, I have the honour to request that the attached document, the press communiqué issued on 24 November 1989 by the South Pacific countries and territories attending the South Pacific Drift-net Fishing Conference at Wellington, be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 30 and 82 (f).

(signed) Ann HERCUS  
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Press communiqué issued on 24 November 1989 by the South Pacific  
Drift-net Fishing Conference held at Wellington

In an historic conference, members of the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency, meeting for the first time with other States and territories in the region, pioneered a unique international Convention for the preservation of their valuable marine living resources.

Representatives from 21 South Pacific countries and territories meeting at Wellington from 21 to 24 November 1989 adopted the Convention on the Prohibition of Drift-net Fishing in the South Pacific.

The Convention is the culmination of intensive effort in the region to respond to the threat, which became apparent in November 1988, due to the dramatically increased capacity of distant water drift-net fleets. The Convention responds to the call by the South Pacific Forum in the July Tarawa Declaration and the resolution of the twenty-ninth South Pacific Conference in Guam, which called for an immediate ban on the practice of drift-net fishing in the South Pacific Commission region.

The Tarawa Declaration was the first formal international statement expressing the concern of countries over the use of this environmentally and economically destructive fishing method.

The Declaration was endorsed recently by Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Malaysia in October. A resolution calling for the cessation of drift-netting in the South Pacific is before the United Nations.

Distant-water fishing nations and the Taiwan Deepsea Tuna Boat Owners and Exporters Association will be invited to associate themselves with the Convention through instruments related to it. Countries of the entire Pacific rim will also be invited to express their solidarity with the countries of the region in a similar way.

Participants noted the Republic of Korea's withdrawal of drift-net vessels from the region and welcomed the reduction in the Japanese fleet and the recent reports that Taiwan would also reduce the number of its drift-net vessels operating in the region. But it was the clear wish of the meeting that those countries should heed the call from the meeting to commit themselves to a complete cessation of drift-net fishing in the region.

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