Preface

Management of the Western and Central Pacific tuna fisheries depends ultimately on effective cooperation and strong conservation and management frameworks. In response, Pacific island States have developed a cooperative approach to fisheries management that has set global precedents and significantly boosted their capacity to manage the region’s tuna fisheries and progress their national interests. The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) provide high quality technical advice and support while the Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions of Access for Foreign Fishing Vessels (HMTCs), the Vessel Day Scheme (VDS), the FFA Vessel Monitoring Scheme (VMS) and the Niue Treaty support collective management, enforcement and exploitation of much of the region’s migratory fisheries. Furthermore, the collective will of the Pacific island States was critical to the establishment of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) within which the Pacific island States are a critical membership bloc and play an important role.

Recent increases in fishing effort and overfishing of some tuna stocks present immediate challenges to the region and its distant water fishing partners to build on this strong history of cooperation and negotiate and implement strong conservation and management measures. These challenges raise a number of complex legal and policy questions.

In April 2008, the FFA hosted a regional conference that explored the legal and policy trends in the implementation of international fisheries instruments in the Western and Central Pacific region. Legal and policy officers from FFA member countries participated in the conference alongside a number of experts who prepared papers on their various relevant areas of expertise. The Conference was an FFA activity of the Global Environment Facility funded Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project.

Subsequently, the FFA commissioned this book to further explore these legal and policy trends. It is with pleasure that I invite readers to consider the complex legal and policy matters critically assessed within this book and their application to the daily tasks of managing and developing our region’s valuable tuna fisheries.

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