

# RECENT EVOLUTION OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN LA REUNION

F A Renée and F Poisson

*IFREMER, Ile de la Réunion*

## ABSTRACT

*As La Réunion is undergoing profound social and economic changes, the time has come for a general mobilisation in view of the employment crisis. It is logical to decide what role the fishing industry should play in the strategy of national development. Fisheries development today plays a significant role in the local economy. More than 5500 tonnes are caught, accounting for 6 % of total exports, 600 jobs in direct employment and 24,000 in indirect employment.*

*We have observed in 5 years a real increase in catches and values in three components of the fishery: Artisanal fishery: boats using handlines in conjunction with troll lines, operating around the 29 FADs set near the island. Semi-artisanal fishery: the total catch is 750 tonnes, mainly by longlines targeting swordfish. This development is due to the sharp increase in the fleet of longliners that exploit swordfish and other pelagic species. The species composition by weight for this fleet is as follows: swordfish 68%, albacore 15%, yellowfin 10%. Industrial fisheries: The fleet targets benthic resources in the French southern EEZs (Crozet Island., Kerguelen, St Paul and Amsterdam). The catch rose from 1600 tonnes in 1993 to 2700 tonnes in 1994. Twenty-eight Taiwanese longliners have been allowed to operate in the EEZ of La Réunion outside 50 nm.*

*The development of longlining operations seems to be more suitable and adapted to catch large pelagic species in the areas surrounding the island. This requires the improvement of specialized harbour supplies, manpower training, processing and marketing operations, and a scientific and technical center assisting regional development.*

*The future of this activity should be through regional cooperation between the various countries of the southwest Indian Ocean, focusing on five points:*

*The creation of a database on longlining activity;*

*Biological studies of swordfish;*

*A study of the selectivity of longline gear;*

*Studies on correlations between resource and environment;*

*Studies of socioeconomic impacts.*

•

