

‘Morobe Fisheries Cooperatives Chairmen made awareness of their roles and responsibilities’

A two days awareness training workshop was convened for the chairman of registered community fisheries cooperatives of Morobe at the Martin Luther Seminary in Lae.

The awareness training workshop was convened by the Morobe Fisheries Management Authority (MFMA) with the funding support of SPC/DevFish2 project.

The Morobe Fisheries Management Authority (MFMA) has been supporting the development of fisheries cooperatives as the medium of SMEs to enable and empower the involvement and meaningful participation of the locals in the fisheries sector both as a small scale community business venture and also as vehicles to providing for food security especially for the urban populace (Lae).

But one regular challenge MFMA sees in the operation of these cooperatives as entities is the lack of knowledge and misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities by the elected executives of these collective entities.

The workshop was led by the provincial senior commerce officer, Fefegao Bainga, who clearly explained the powers and functions of the cooperative societies under the Cooperatives Societies Act.

Participants were very engaged and had a considerable discussion on the roles and responsibilities of the executives as ‘drivers’ of their individual cooperatives.

The SPC/DevFish project officer, Jonathan Manieva commented; *“Drivers of collective bodies like the fisheries cooperatives are a critical factor in the success or failure of these entities. A strong and committed driver or leadership group is vital to success. And importantly must be seen to be promoting the collective interest of the cooperative.”*

The discussions also highlighted the need for these executives to support each other in their roles and responsibilities and further enable them to pursue opportunities rather than been idle.

The workshop was well commended by the participants. Tek Yana, chairman of Salamaua Fisheries Cooperatives and John Beu of Kana Fisheries Cooperative of the Morobe LLG commented; *“This awareness training is the first of its kind since the cooperatives were established. We now realise that cooperative is the simplest form of business entity that we villagers in remote areas have. We can cooperate and pull resources together amongst ourselves to start and run business activities rather than sitting and waiting for free hand outs from the government. Only when we are actually doing business and serving our members interests than it makes it easier for*

government agencies to partner with us and help us. We are very appreciative of this awareness training.”

The workshop was officially closed by the Chairman, Provincial Fisheries and Marine Resources, Philemon Tomala, who also echoed and supported the chairmen’s resolve to now pursue their cooperatives pursuits with more determination with the awareness gained at this training.