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JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

**RT HON G W R PALMER, PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND
HON R J HAWKE, PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA**

2 FEBRUARY 1990

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.30 AM

At a ceremony today attended by the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Right Honourable Geoffrey Palmer, the Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable Bob Hawke, signed the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific. Mr Palmer had signed the Convention in November last year.

Both Prime Ministers acknowledged that the Convention, which was adopted at Wellington on 24 November 1989, was a significant step towards the elimination of the environmentally disastrous technique of driftnet fishing. They pledged to cooperate even more closely at both the multilateral and bilateral levels to bring this practice to an end.

Noting that the Convention requires the parties to collaborate on surveillance and enforcement measures, the Prime Ministers announced that they would initiate a range of cooperative measures aimed at increasing the Forum Fisheries Agency database on the activities of driftnet vessels. These measures could include:

- The development of a programme of surveillance by RAAF and RNZAF aircraft over the Tasman Sea for driftnetting in the 1990/91 season.
- The intensification of their surveillance of driftnet fishing in high seas areas of the South Pacific.
- The targeting of driftnet activities within their present surveillance of South Pacific EEZs, in consultation with the South Pacific countries.

- The fullest support for the Forum Fisheries Agency in the design and development of an integrated programme of regional fisheries surveillance, including the targetting of driftnet activities in the South Pacific Exclusive Economic Zones and in the high seas areas of the South Pacific. Such a programme was called for by South Pacific Forum leaders at Tarawa in July 1989.

These activities to be complemented where necessary by appropriate changes to the routings of existing naval patrols.

The Prime Ministers noted that work had already begun between New Zealand and Australia on an arrangement for mutual assistance and cooperation in fisheries compliance matters, including the exchange of fisheries related information. Working more closely in respect of driftnet activities will now form a vital part of that cooperation.

They also noted that cooperation on this issue will include efforts in international forums such as the United Nations which has already adopted a resolution heralding the complete cessation of driftnetting in the South Pacific by 1 July 1991 and elsewhere by mid 1992. The resolution was co-sponsored by both New Zealand and Australia.

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