



Fisher FOLK Net

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A newsletter to share information among fisher folk organisations and people in fisheries on matters relating to sustainable fisheries management and other issues of interest to fisher folk organisations throughout the region

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Grenada workshop a resounding success!

As reported in the 25 September 2007 issue of **Fisher Folk Net**, the CRFM/CTA fisher folk project will assist in establishing a regional network of NFOs, and ultimately a more formal regional fisher folk organisation (RFO). To this end a **Regional Fisheries Stakeholder Workshop to Promote the Launching of a Caribbean Network of National Fisher Folk Organisations** was held in Grenada from 26 to 28 September 2007. This special issue shares news of the workshop and plans for the future.

Solid turnout for workshop

Over 35 participants attended the workshop held at the Flamboyant Hotel conference room. They came from Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Bahamas, Canada, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago.

Participants included fisher folk leaders, fisheries officers, cooperatives officers, organizers, resource persons and a facilitator (Mr. Reuben Charles from Guyana).



Conference room at the Flamboyant Hotel filled to capacity with over 35 workshop participants

CRFM Secretariat, UWI Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) were the organizing and resource organizations. The government of Grenada, through its Fisheries Division, was an excellent host.



Acting Chief Fisheries Officer Johnson St. Louis and his Grenada Fisheries Division support team

Fisher folk coordinating unit formed at workshop



Members of the fisher folk coordinating unit and supporting government agencies after election

The highlight of the workshop was the expressed commitment of the Member States present to the formation of the RFO, and the election of participants to form a fisher folk coordinating unit to link the NFOs regionally, and establish the formal RFO. It is significant that this is the first attempt to network fisher folk leaders and their groups in recent times. It is a major step forward.

The fisher folk members of the unit are:

- Mitchell Lay, Antigua & Barbuda Fisheries Alliance Inc (Coordinator)
- Joslyn Lee Quay, Seafood Industry Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Deputy Coordinator)
- Nadine Nembhard, Belize Fishermen Co-operative Association (Secretary)
- Vernel Nicholls, Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organizations
- Parmanand Sewdien, Suriname Seafood Association

Persons selected from supporting agencies:

- Chester Langaige, Department of Co-operatives, Grenada
- Petronila Polius, Department of Fisheries, St. Lucia
- Terrence Phillips, CRFM Secretariat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Patrick McConney, CERMES, UWI, Barbados
- Brian Davy, IISD, Canada

The CRFM Secretariat, UWI/CERMES and IISD were also identified as supporting agencies.



The coordinating unit gets down to serious work

The coordinating unit developed an action plan at the workshop and is busily refining it now in collaboration with the supporting agencies and NFOs. Over the next few months the unit will try to ensure that progress to form the RFO is kept on track while the NFOs continue to receive the support that they need to form a solid foundation. We hope that fisher folk organisations, government agencies and other fisheries stakeholders play their part in assisting the unit to link various groups.



Strong support at policy and official levels

Participating fisher folk were encouraged from as early as the opening ceremony when the Honourable Gregory Bowen, the minister responsible for fisheries in Grenada, voiced strong support for the roles fisher folk play from fish harvesting and marketing, to policy and governance.

Minister Bowen said that the industry would be better served by having a centralized organization to represent and address its issues and he pledged his ministry and government's full support to the regional organization.

In a show of support for the importance of the workshop and overall significance of the project, Hugh Saul, the busy Executive Director of the CRFM Secretariat, remained to participate actively with the fisher folk and raised key issues throughout the meeting. Dr. Brian Davy, from Canada, was impressed by the energy and interest at the workshop.



Hugh Saul (L), Executive Director CRFM Secretariat, and Brian Davy (R) of the IISD deep in conversation on international links for fisher folk



Fisher folk flesh out networking strategy

Participants were guided by the facilitator, Reuben Charles, to share information on their fisher folk groups; to consider various means of communication; to develop goals, objectives, activities, structure, membership and means of sustainable financing for the regional fisher folk body and many more tasks. The workshop report will contain details.

Four to attend 60th GCFI in the Dominican Republic

Four fishermen, whose participation will be funded by the CRFM, were selected to attend the 60th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI). They are Mitchell Lay of Antigua & Barbuda, Havelan Honeyghan of Jamaica, Winston Hobson of Nevis and Ignatiuss Carroll of The Bahamas.

As reported in the last issue of **Fisher Folk Net**, CRFM and CERMES are organising a special session on **Fisher folk and fisheries scientists linking and learning together**. It will be chaired by Anderson Kinch, a fisherman/boat owner from Barbados who is on the board of GCFI. More information on the conference can be found at www.gcfi.org

After GCFI the fishers will report back to the organisations in their countries to share experiences and make recommendations on any future involvement in GCFI meetings.

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