



# 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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## Happy Holidays!

Welcome to the bumper December edition of **Fisher Folk Net**. Following on from the success of the **Regional Fisheries Stakeholder Workshop to Promote the Launching of a Caribbean Network of National Fisher Folk Organizations** held in Grenada from September 26 to 28, 2007, there has been a flurry of fisher folk organization (FFO) activity throughout the network. We are pleased to bring you reports on the efforts of several FFOs in this packed holiday issue of the newsletter. Enjoy reading and have a happy holiday season.



## *GCFI meetings a must for progressive fishers*

Mitchell Lay, Coordinator of the recently formed Fisher Folk Co-ordinating Unit, is encouraging other fishers to attend future meetings of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI). Guadeloupe is the 2008 venue.

As reported in the last issue of **Fisher Folk Net**, Lay of Antigua and Barbuda was one of

four fishermen selected at the Grenada workshop in September to attend the 60<sup>th</sup> GCFI conference in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, held from November 5 to 9, 2007.



(L to R) Patrick McConney of CERMES, Mitchell Lay of Antigua and Anderson Kinch of Barbados listening to comments during the fishers forum.

Following the GCFI conference, Lay said he: "highly recommends that fishers not only attend, but make interest-oriented presentations while sharing experiences gained from being on the sea."

He described the conference as: "a very beneficial experience" but lamented the "paucity of fisher folk interest represented".

Along with the usefulness of GCFI's database of information, Lay highlighted the knowledge he gained regarding fish stocks, spawning aggregations, spiny lobster life cycle and distribution, identification of current lines via

satellite, marine protected areas (MPAs), ecosystem based fisheries management and large marine ecosystems (LMEs), trade issues involving the US and CITES as topics having the most useful applications for him.

Lay said his interactions with fishers and scientists over the period were enjoyable and enlightening. Not only did he find sharing experiences particularly valuable for habitat and stock management, but it was informative to see how scientific research papers had an impact on resource management and policy.

CRFM and CERMES organised a special session on **Fisher folk and fisheries scientists linking and learning together** during the conference. Lay said this fishers' forum was useful and should be maintained for future conferences. For more information and the forum report visit [www.gcfi.org](http://www.gcfi.org)



## ***St Lucia forms umbrella cooperative***

The Saint Lucia Fisherfolk Co-Operative Society Ltd is now officially established. The Society was registered on September 21, 2007 under the Co-Operative Societies Act 1999 No. 28 and held its first general meeting on November 18, 2007 in Castries.

Six out of the eight registered fishermen's co-operative societies have now become full fledged members, and they participated fully at the meeting. The highlight of the meeting was the election of the board of directors,

which had a format to include representatives from all the societies present.

The elected members are: Gerald Louis of the Castries Fishers Co-operative - President; Christopher James of the Choiseul Fishers Co-operative - Vice President; Finbar Delicette of the Gros Islet Fishers Co-operative - Treasurer; Mc Millan Medard of the Anse La Raye Fishers and Consumers Society - Secretary; Julian Alexis of the Soufriere Fishers Co-operative - Vice Secretary; Lindel Reggie of the Dennery Fishers Co-operative - Floor Representative; and Julietta Herman of the Gros Islet Fishers Co-operative - Floor Representative.

The elected members were very enthusiastic, and pledged their commitment to move the Saint Lucia Fisherfolk Co-operative Society forward.



The new board (left to right): McMillan Medard, Julian Alexis, Gerald Louis, Lindel Reggie, Julietta Herman, Finbar Delicette, Christopher James

## ***SVG a step closer to NFO***

On December 4, 2007 a Steering Committee was established to co-ordinate and plan activities regarding the formation of a National Fisherfolk Organization (NFO) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Several meetings and discussions were held prior to December 4 with fisher folk, the executive members of three registered primary fisher folk organizations: Barrouallie Fisheries Development Cooperative Society, Calliaqua Fisherfolk Cooperative Society and the Goodwill Fishermen's Cooperative Society; the Fisheries Division and the Cooperative Division.

At these meetings the fishers recognized the need for an NFO and have pledged their commitment toward the establishment of this Organization.

The proposed name is St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Fisherfolk Organization.



## ***Antigua NEMMA highlights need for greater level of fisher input***

The establishment of the North East Marine Management Area (NEMMA) in Antigua and Barbuda clearly signals the need for fisher folk on that island to participate more fully in the governance/management of marine resources or risk forfeiting their interest.

This concern has been raised by Antiguan fisher and leader of the Fisher Folk Coordinating Unit, Mitchell Lay.

Lay pointed to the NEMMA as one example of regional governments' attempts to "grapple with the complex issue of managing shared resources sustainably and in the national

interest" by imposing restrictions and establishing marine protected/managed areas. In the case of NEMMA, Lay points out that the area once entirely open to commercial fishers is now a declared management area under the OECS Protected Areas and Associated Sustainable Livelihoods (OPAAL) project and fishing will be restricted or prohibited in some areas.

The "area vision" is for "a self-financing, multiple use (yachting, fishing, tourism, conservation, recreation) protected area that maintains and enhances the natural beauty and unique biodiversity of the area, both terrestrial and marine, supported by an efficient legislative framework and ongoing awareness program".

Despite the fact that the Fishers' Alliance and community groups will have places in the proposed non-profit management company for the NEMMA, Lay said the initiative still pointed to the need for stakeholders to collaborate and effectively lobby for interests. "There is a need for strong fisher folk organizations, the voice of the unrepresented is not heard," said Lay.



## ***TTUF comes up with budget and strategic plan***

Between October and November 2007 members of the Trinidad and Tobago United Fisherfolk (TTUF) and other industry stakeholders came together in a strategic workshop to formulate a budget and a strategic plan for the TTUF.



**Members of The Trinidad and Tobago United Fisherfolk engaging in a two day workshop to formulate a Strategic Plan 2007 – 2012 for the organization.**

This strategic plan is a working document that represents a first attempt to articulate a vision and mission for TTUF, as well as set some strategic direction for the organization going forward. The planning process is continuous, iterative and interactive. Participants expressed their commitment to work together to complete the process in the upcoming months.

This effort is being supported by the Seafood Industry Development Company (SIDC) in keeping with its mandate for the "unification of the coastal fishing communities". SIDC began to support and facilitate the efforts of TTUF through a number of activities including, provision of meeting space, coordination of meetings etc.

SIDC further agreed to support the preparation of a Strategic Plan for TTUF based on a decision taken at a meeting of both organizations on August 15, 2007, where it was decided "that a budget and a strategic plan be developed for TTUF".



## ***2007 - 2008 a packed year for Belize fisheries co-operative***

The 2007 to 2008 administrative year is proving to be one packed with collaboration between the Belize Fisheries Co-operative Association (BCFA) and a number of governmental and regional agencies.

According to reports from the fishers co-operative, over that period the BCFA plans to participate in the forming of a Caribbean network of national fisherfolk organizations.

Environmental Defence (ED) is also in dialogue with the BCFA members to conduct a pilot project in 2008 to demonstrate that it is possible to transform the management of Belize's fisheries by using incentives to align the economic interests of the fishermen with conservation outcomes. Rather than using conventional fishery management techniques, ED works with fishermen to create incentive-based tools called catch shares. Catch shares encourage cooperative-based management of the fishery. An option in this project is to limit some access to a given area to fishermen who have historically fished an area and are highly dependent on that area for livelihoods.

Through the support of the Belize Fisheries Department, the BCFA solicited funds from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) to conduct a host of training workshops, provide capacity building for the BCFA and develop a Management Plan for the Turneffe Island Atolls. PACT has agreed to support BCFA's efforts. The project Proposal will be developed in January 2008.



The National Fishermen Producers Cooperative (NFPC) is planning a Fish Mariculture Programme in association with a Florida (USA) firm. The initiative will begin with cobia by bringing in fingerlings to grow out in pens; afterwards, a hatchery/nursery is planned; and depending on the success of this venture, initial processing will take place at NFPC's facilities, with a separate processing plant being envisioned. Finally, other species such as grouper, snapper and ornamental fish will be included.

The Minister of Natural Resources and Environment has granted 500 acres of land in Turneffe Islands for distribution of 1 acre parcels to BFCA member cooperative fishermen who use that area. The aim is to provide alternative livelihood opportunities for Turneffe fishermen to become involved in sustainable tourism activities in the same way that the Punta Allen fishermen have done.



## ***Dominica to launch NFO in January 2008***

Thanks to the support of two Dominican government agencies - the Fisheries Division and the Co-operative Division - fishers there are expected to be able to launch the new National Association of Fisherfolk Cooperatives Society Ltd. (NAFCOOP) in the first week of January 2008.

Initially the Cooperative Commissioner had said NAFCOOP could be launched on December 15 or 23, 2007, but it was decided the members would be too busy during Christmas time.

That efforts have come this far is a result of the dedication of the steering committee formed to advance the process during the July 17, 2007, workshop to launch an NFO in Dominica.

The committee kept to its mandate to engage five other interested primary fisher folk organizations to get involved in the formation of an NFO for Dominica.

The steering committee has completed meetings with all the fisher folk organizations in Dominica, both registered and un-registered ones. The registered ones have agreed to be members of the NFO and the un-registered groups have agreed to organize themselves to become registered and to eventually become members of the NFO.

The proposed NFO will be comprised of five registered Fisheries Cooperatives who have met all the requirements for registration under the Cooperative Societies Act of Dominica.

## ***First NFO consultation held for Carriacou and Petite Martinique***

The first fisher consultation in Grenada's twin island parish of Carriacou and Petite Martinique took place on the island of Petite Martinique at the fishermen co-operative building.

Junior McDonald, Fisheries Officer for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, pointed out in his brief remarks that the process of formulating a National Fisher Organization had already begun on mainland Grenada and in the context of the CSME fishers needed to have a voice in influencing regional fishery

policy since they will all be affected by CSME agreements.

President of the co-operative, Dexter Miller pointed out during his remarks that fishers always need to unify themselves in order to protect their interests. Fisheries Division extension officer and NFO consultant Francis Calliste supported this statement noting that a regional fishers organisation was needed to protect fishers from the possible adverse impacts of CSME as, so far, fisheries policy decisions are being made at the regional level largely without input from the primary stakeholders - the fishers themselves

By the conclusion of the meeting, consensus was reached for a new NFO to be formed, with Miller and Francis DeRoache being nominated to represent the fishers of Petite Martinique and Carriacou on the NFO when it is formed.

## ***Trade issues for attention of ACP fishers***

Changing world trade rules are having increasing impact on the export earning potential of fishers in the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Member States.

According to a recent discussion note based on an e-consultation on ACP-European Union (EU) fisheries relations, quality and traceability of fish products represent two main challenges for the ACP artisanal fishing sector in supplying international fish markets like the EU.

While stating that the establishment of traceability norms for ACP countries fisheries products could, in the long term, benefit ACP artisanal fishers, the note also recognised that conditions for their

implementation must be provided to allow the sector to adjust.

"The increasing dominance of large retailers in fish products distribution within the EU has many implications for the ACP artisanal fishing sector suppliers. Only the most efficient and those able to conform to EU standards, such as hygiene and traceability, will be able to compete as suppliers for these retailers. This involves not only significant investment costs, management skills and new forms of organizations amongst fishing communities, but also considerable support from ACP authorities at local, national and regional levels," it stated.

## ***Socio-economic monitoring by Caribbean fishery authorities: a new project***

CERMES is the SocMon leader for the English-speaking Caribbean. CRFM Member State fisheries authorities and the CRFM Secretariat have requested training in SocMon Caribbean methods in support of inshore fisheries and coastal management. Training is to be provided in selected countries by CERMES in partnership with the authorities and CRFM Secretariat via a series of five 3-day workshops with follow-up field studies at 5 assessment and monitoring sites. It is intended to train 50 fisheries stakeholders and produce outputs for the global SocMon database, UWI, CRFM and regional meetings to enhance further uptake of SocMon.

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