

# PRESS RELEASE

## CRFM Ministerial Council addresses fisheries, aquaculture, and blue economy priorities at 20<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting

Belize City, Belize, 3 June 2026 (CRFM)—The Ministerial Council of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism ([CRFM](#)), a regional inter-governmental body of the Caribbean Community ([CARICOM](#)), convened its Twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) Regular Meeting today. The Council, comprised of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Blue Economy Ministers from the Caribbean, deliberated via teleconference on key issues confronting the sector. These include bolstering aquaculture development, improving food security, strengthening resilience to climate and disaster risks through insurance, and notable gains in addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Before delving into these pressing matters, the Council elected Hon. Randy Baltimore, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and the Blue Economy, Antigua and Barbuda, as Chair of the Council. Minister Baltimore succeeds Hon. Kyle Hodge, Minister of Economic Development, Industry, Commerce, Lands, Planning, Water, and Natural Resources, Anguilla, who rendered stellar service as Chair of the CRFM Ministerial Council during the previous year.



**Hon. Randy Baltimore of Antigua and Barbuda was elected as Chair of the CRFM Ministerial Council for 2026-2027**

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In accepting the Chairmanship, Antigua and Barbuda reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening regional cooperation, promoting sustainable use of marine resources, supporting fisherfolk livelihoods, and advancing innovative solutions to challenges facing the fisheries sector, including climate change, illegal fishing, and marine resource management.

Minister Baltimore said: *“The Government of Antigua and Barbuda looks forward to working closely with CRFM Member States and regional partners to further the sustainable development of the Caribbean’s fisheries and blue economy sectors during its tenure as Chair.”*

He noted that he had recently been assigned to the portfolio following national elections in the Member State. Supported by the Chair of the Caribbean Fisheries Forum, Mr. Ian Horsford, Chief Fisheries Officer, Antigua and Barbuda, the Ministers effectively addressed a range of topics, resulting in the passage of 19 resolutions critical to the advancement of the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

In addressing the Council at the conclusion of the meeting, CRFM Executive Director, Dr. Marc Williams said: *“The Caribbean stands at a pivotal moment when sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, the Blue Economy, climate resilience, and ocean governance must be integrated to secure prosperity for present and future generations. I encourage all Member States to maintain their strong engagement in implementing today’s resolutions and to continue supporting the CRFM as a premier regional institution for fisheries and ocean governance.”*

The Ministers approved a new 5-year aquaculture action plan, as well as a new biennial work plan and budget for the CRFM, spanning 2026-2027. They also received updates on three regional initiatives through which critical work is being undertaken by the CRFM, in collaboration with its Member States and institutional partners, to strengthen the sector. These are the Canadian-funded Sustainable Technologies for Adaptation and Resilience in Fisheries (STAR-fish) Project, the IICA/EDF-EU Food Security Project, as well as the GEF/FAO/CAF/CRFM BE-CLME+ Project: Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Plus.

*“The Council’s decisions on the CRFM work plan and budget, financial management, staffing, and strategic priorities provide a strong foundation for advancing the CRFM’s goals and delivering tangible benefits to the people who depend on our marine resources,”* Dr. Williams said.

The Council is scheduled to meet again later this year, during the 20<sup>th</sup> Caribbean Week of Agriculture in Jamaica.

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## PRESS CONTACT

**NAME:** Dr. Marc Williams, Executive Director (Ag.)  
**PHONE:** 501-223-4443  
**E-mail:** [marc.williams@crfm.int](mailto:marc.williams@crfm.int)

## ABOUT THE CRFM:

The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) was officially inaugurated on 27 March 2003 in Belize City, Belize, where it is headquartered, following the signing of the Agreement Establishing the CRFM on 4 February 2002. It is an inter-governmental organization whose mission is to promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region’s fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region.