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## **REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL MEETING ON ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING AND TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY**



16 March 2022

CRFM Secretariat, Belize  
2022

# **CRFM Technical & Advisory Document - Number 2022 / 01**

## **Report of the Technical Meeting on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Transnational Organized Crime in the Fishing Industry**

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CRFM Secretariat  
Belize, 2022

## CRFM TECHNICAL & ADVISORY DOCUMENT - Number 2022 / 01

Report of the Technical Meeting on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Transnational Organized Crime in the Fishing Industry, (Electronic) Belize City, Belize, 16 March 2022.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) expresses its gratitude to all Member States and partners for their continued commitment to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and transnational organized crime in the fishing industry. The CRFM especially acknowledges the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS), and the Regional Security System (RSS), as well as our international partners: the Government of Norway, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for their contributions to advancing the region's agenda to strengthen its response to this very challenging problem.

The CRFM and its Member States look forward to enhanced collaboration, as we work with other members of the Blue Justice Community to leverage the available innovations and technology to scale up the region's collective response to IUU fishing and organized crime in the fishing sector.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AI - Artificial Intelligence

AIS - Automatic Identification System

BJI - Blue Justice Initiative

CARICOM- Caribbean Community

CARICOM IMPACS - the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security

CO-LAB - collaboration laboratory under the Blue Justice Initiative

CRFM - Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism

EEZ - Exclusive Economic Zone

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization

GeoJson - GeoJSON is an open standard geospatial data interchange format that represents simple geographic features and their nonspatial attributes. It is based on JavaScript Object Notation (JSON)

GPX - GPS Exchange Format

ILO- International Labour Organization

Interpol - International Police

IUU - Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing

JNCC - Joint Nature Conservation Committee (of the UK)

jpg - a raster image whose standard was developed by the Joint Photographic Experts Group

kml - Keyhole Markup Language

MCS - Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

MDA - Maritime Domain Awareness

MIST - Multilateral Investigative Support Team

MMSIs - Maritime Mobile Service Identities

NA-FIG - North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group

NRO - Nordic Representation Office (UNDP)

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OECS - Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States

OGC - UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre

pdf - portable document format

png - Portable Graphics Format

RSS - Regional Security System

SDG - Sustainable Development Goal

SOLAS - 'Safety of Life at Sea'

TopoJson - is an extension of GeoJSON that encodes topology

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

USA - United States of America

VMS - Vessel Monitoring System (also Vessel Management System)

xls - the standard format of a spreadsheet file created by Microsoft Excel

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## BACKGROUND

For the past two decades the [Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism](#) (CRFM) has been working along with its Member States to address the challenge of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, which poses a major threat to fisheries resources in the Caribbean region. IUU fishing undermines regional and national efforts to sustainably use, manage and protect fish stocks and marine ecosystems, leading to untold losses of both short and long-term social and economic opportunities, including food security, livelihoods, exports, and the realization of sustainable and inclusive blue economic growth of the region.

The CRFM and its Member States are very concerned about the growing connection between IUU fishing and transnational organized criminal activities, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking and trade in contraband goods, which use fishing as a cover, as well as document fraud and forgery, tax crimes, and money laundering commonly associated with these activities.

On 10 December 2020, The Hon. Ezechiel Joseph, as Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources and Co-operatives, Saint Lucia, and the then Chairman of the Ministerial Council of the CRFM, delivered a statement on behalf of CARICOM / CRFM Member States at a virtual High-Level International Blue Justice Conference that was convened by the Government of Norway, setting out the collective vision and the regional actions taken and initiatives planned to combat IUU fishing and organized crime in the fishing industry.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- **15 October 2018:**  
The International Declaration on Transnational Organized Crime in the Global Fishing Industry (also known as the '[Copenhagen Declaration](#)') was initially adopted by 9 countries: Faroe Islands, Ghana, Indonesia, Kiribati, Namibia, Norway, Palau, Solomon Islands, and Sri Lanka.
- **10 December 2020:**  
Several Ministers responsible for Fisheries from the CARICOM / CRFM Member States took part in a virtual High-Level International Blue Justice Conference that was convened by the Government of Norway. The main purpose of the Conference was to promote and advance political support for the non-binding Copenhagen Declaration on Transnational Organized Crime in the fishing industry.
- **21 May 2021:**  
At the Fifteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the CRFM, Ministers discussed the issues and recognized the need for Member States to cooperate with other affected countries to improve understanding and knowledge of the problem, identify countermeasures, and build capacity to prevent, deter and eradicate IUU fishing and transnational organized crime in the fishing industry, in the region and globally. The Ministers issued [Resolution No. MC 15\(6\) of 2021](#), documenting their position.
- **4 October 2021:**  
During a special ministerial meeting, several Ministers from the Caribbean Community responsible for Fisheries, the Blue Economy and related matters, delivered official statements endorsing The Copenhagen Declaration. They also affirmed their support for the Blue Justice Initiative, established by the Government of Norway to support implementation of the declaration. ([View the proceedings and country statements here.](#)) Twelve (12) CRFM Member States, signed the Copenhagen Declaration on this occasion.



The Ministerial Council of the CRFM followed-up on this undertaking at its Fifteenth Meeting held on 21 May 2021. It issued *Resolution No. MC 15(6) of 2021*, expressing support for the Copenhagen Declaration as well as the [Blue Justice Initiative](#), which together provide a non-binding international framework for cooperation among States. Below are the immediate next steps outlined in the Ministerial Resolution.

- Convene a high-level, virtual ministerial conference of CRFM Member States at which Ministers wishing to do so would deliver brief statements on the subject of IUU fishing and organized crime in the fisheries sector and then sign the Copenhagen Declaration. (*This was accomplished on 4 October 2021.*)
- Convene, in collaboration with UNDP, a regional technical meeting with fisheries and security officials from Member States to map out the specific needs and to agree on at least one high-priority intervention that will benefit all CRFM Member States and that could be supported under the Blue Justice Initiative. (*This technical meeting of 16 March 2022 satisfies this mandate.*)
- Collaborating with the Blue Justice Initiative to strengthen the response of CRFM Member States to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and organized crime in the fishing industry, and to leverage the opportunity for collaboration with other interested States and organizations through strategic interventions, using technology and innovations. (*This commitment forms the basis of the next steps outlined in this report.*)

At the high-level Ministerial Meeting convened on 4 October 2021, twelve (12) CRFM Member States signed the International Declaration on Transnational Organized Crime in the Global Fishing Industry (also known as the '[Copenhagen Declaration](#)').

These CRFM Member States are:

1. The Bahamas
2. Belize
3. Grenada
4. Guyana
5. Jamaica
6. Montserrat
7. Saint Kitts and Nevis
8. Saint Lucia
9. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
10. Suriname
11. Trinidad and Tobago
12. The Turks and Caicos Islands

## WHAT IS THE COPENHAGEN DECLARATION?

The *Copenhagen Declaration* is an important international framework for cooperation, capacity building, sharing of knowledge and coordination of action against IUU and organized crime in fisheries. Furthermore, it provides the political basis and framework for the Blue Justice Initiative, under which the Norwegian Government in cooperation with other interested countries and UN organizations (primarily the UNDP) help to find effective and sustainable solutions to IUU fishing and transnational organized crime. The goal is to create a fair, equitable and profitable blue economy free from fisheries crime.

Sources: CRFM and the Blue Justice Initiative

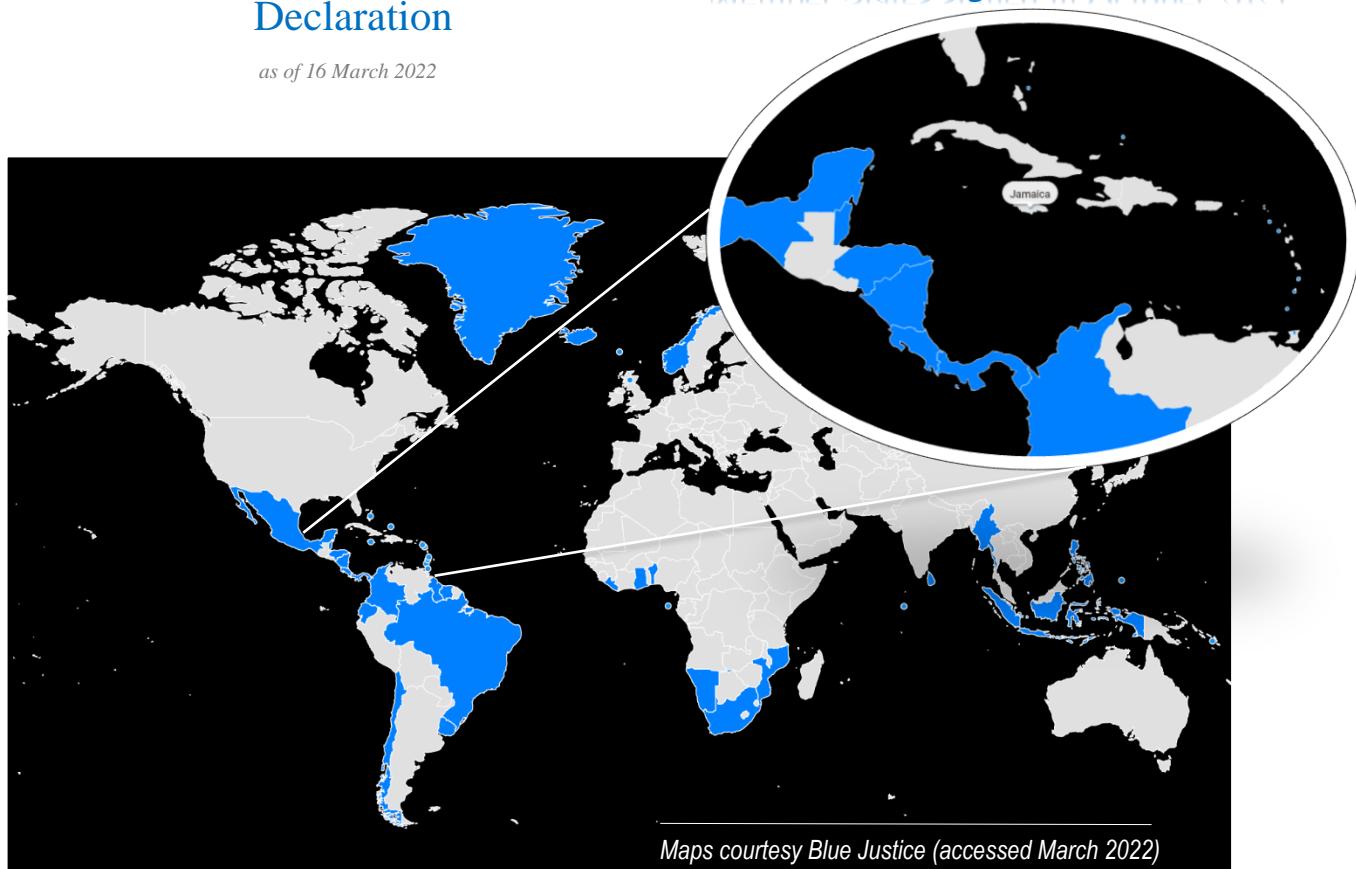
# 48 countries

## have signed the Copenhagen Declaration

as of 16 March 2022

# 12 CRFM

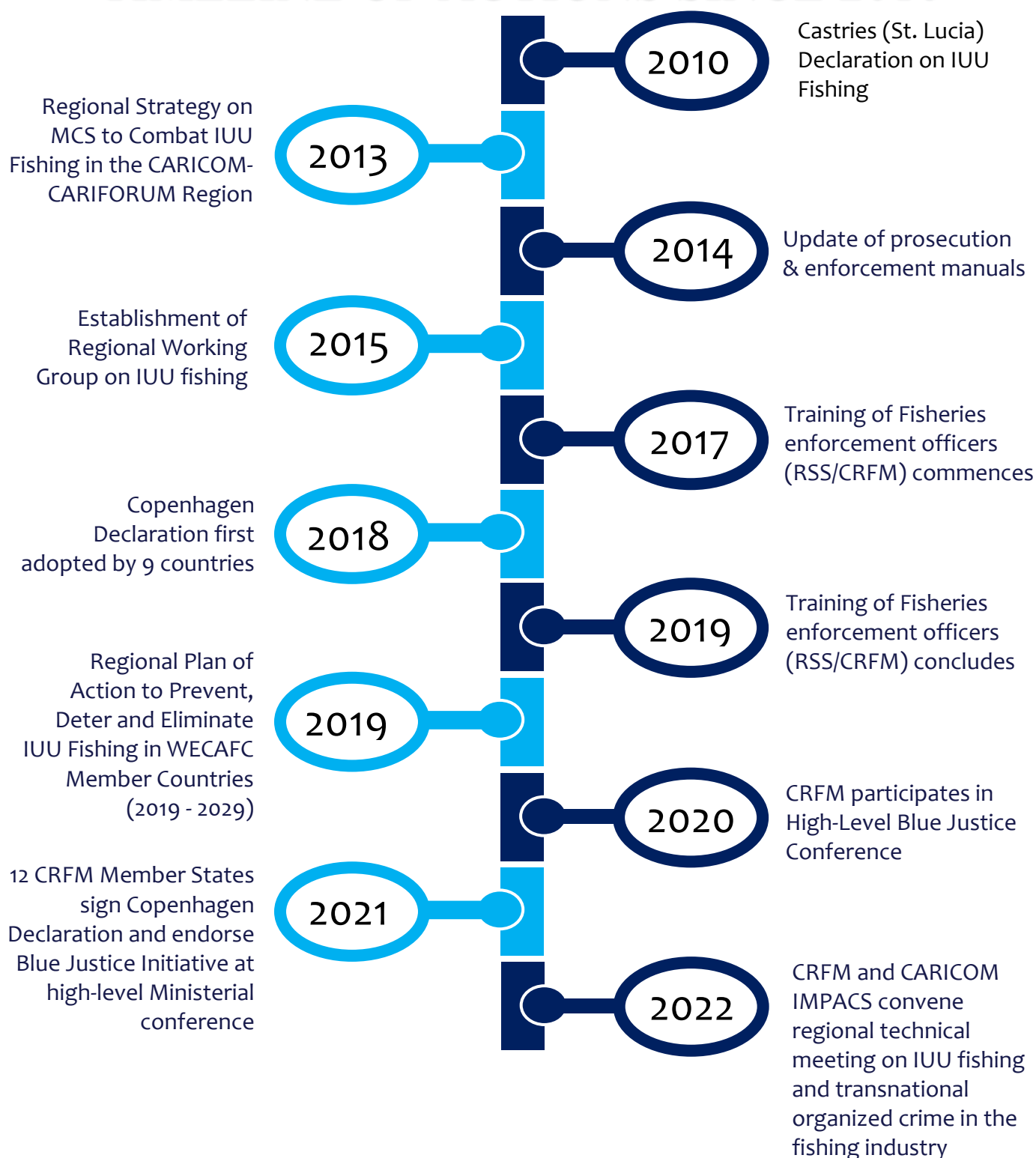
## Member States signed in October 2021



Maps courtesy Blue Justice (accessed March 2022)

*The Copenhagen Declaration was initially adopted by 9 countries: Faroe Islands, Ghana, Indonesia, Kiribati, Namibia, Norway, Palau, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka on 15 October 2018. Since then, The Bahamas, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Fiji, Greenland, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, Jamaica, Liberia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Montserrat, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nicaragua, Panama, Philippines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, São Tomè and Príncipe, Scotland, Seychelles, South Africa, Suriname, Timor Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and Uruguay have signed the declaration.*

## TIMELINE OF ACTIONS SINCE 2010



## INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS) co-hosted the Technical Meeting on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Transnational Organized Crime in the Fishing Industry on Wednesday, 16 March 2022. Over 90 participants from 15 Member States of the CRFM and representatives of the CARICOM Secretariat, the CRFM, CARICOM IMPACS, the Regional Security System (RSS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Government of Norway participated in the virtual session, convened via Microsoft Teams.

The regional technical meeting of senior fisheries and maritime law enforcement officers was convened to engage Member States and the Blue Justice Initiative in identifying the specific needs of the region that could be urgently addressed to scale up coordinated and targeted actions to combat and eradicate IUU fishing and transnational organized crime in the fisheries sector in the region, through support from the Blue Justice Initiative and the Blue Resilience Project.

This meeting has advanced the region's efforts to fortify its response to this very challenging and costly problem, through coordinated action at both the national and regional levels, with the support of the Government of Norway and the United Nations Development Programme under the Blue Justice Initiative.

Welcome remarks were delivered by Mr. Milton Haughton, Executive Director, CRFM; Mr. Henrik Larsen, Director, UNDP Nordic Representation Office; Lt. Col. Michael Jones, Executive Director, CARICOM IMPACS; and Ambassador Beate Stiro of Norway. Hon. Saboto Caesar, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour, and Chair of the Ministerial Council of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, delivered remarks and officially declared the meeting opened.

Speakers were drawn from:

- The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
- The CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
- The Fisheries Division of Trinidad and Tobago
- The Fisheries Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Lands, and the Environment of Montserrat
- The Government of Norway
- The Blue Justice Initiative Secretariat
- The UNDP Nordic Representation Office
- The UNDP Blue Resilience Project

## PURPOSE OF THE MEETING:

TO MAP OUT THE SPECIFIC NEEDS AND TO AGREE ON AT LEAST ONE HIGH-PRIORITY INTERVENTION THAT WILL BENEFIT ALL CRFM MEMBER STATES, TO COMBAT AND ERADICATE IUU FISHING AND TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN THE REGION.

Topics addressed during the regional technical meeting were:

- The Blue Justice Initiative and Copenhagen Declaration
- The UNDP Blue Resilience Project
- The use of digital technology
- Institutional cooperation under the Blue Resilience Project
- Tools and techniques to detect and analyze fisheries crime
- A general overview of fisheries crime in the Caribbean

There was also an interactive session during which participants asked questions, provided comments and feedback, and discussed recommendations for the way forward.

## GENDER PARITY<sup>1</sup>

MALES  
57 persons  
63%

FEMALES  
33 persons  
37%

6 PARTICIPATING ENTITIES	15 PARTICIPATING MEMBER STATES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. CARICOM Secretariat</li><li>2. CRFM Secretariat</li><li>3. CARICOM IMPACS</li><li>4. Regional Security System</li><li>5. United Nations Development Programme</li><li>6. Government of Norway</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Antigua and Barbuda</li><li>2. The Bahamas</li><li>3. Barbados</li><li>4. Belize</li><li>5. Dominica</li><li>6. Grenada</li><li>7. Guyana</li><li>8. Jamaica</li><li>9. Montserrat</li><li>10. Saint Kitts and Nevis</li><li>11. Saint Lucia</li><li>12. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</li><li>13. Suriname</li><li>14. Trinidad and Tobago</li><li>15. The Turks and Caicos Islands</li></ol>

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<sup>1</sup> The gender of some participants was not specified.

## **KEY POINTS FROM THE OPENING SESSION**

1. The global fight against IUU fishing and organized crime has increased, and the CRFM—which has a mandate to work with Member States towards sustainable fisheries—intends to strengthen collaboration with regional and international partners and other friendly governments such as Norway to address the problem. No country can address the problems alone.
2. The prevention and elimination of IUU fishing and organized crime in the fisheries sector is necessary to realize the full development and benefits of the region's blue economic potential.
3. The CRFM recognizes the synergies that can be obtained by interagency collaboration; therefore, the regional technical meeting was co-hosted by the CRFM Secretariat and CARICOM IMPACS, whose mandate includes maritime security in the region.
4. CRFM Ministers responsible for fisheries and/or the blue economy have formally denounced IUU fishing and transnational organized crime, while several have pledged their commitment to combat the problem through collaboration and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels.
5. The Government of Norway has given a high level of political commitment to support developing countries in combatting IUU fishing and transnational organized crime.
6. Norway and UNDP reaffirmed their commitment to support CRFM Member States, through the Blue Justice Initiative, with a focus on addressing capacity through interagency collaboration to build the Caribbean's resilience to combat fisheries crimes.
7. It is important for the Caribbean region to address fisheries crimes in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
8. Greater international and regional cooperation is needed to improve understanding of the nature, scope and implications of the problem of fisheries crime and raise public awareness.
9. This Technical Meeting enabled law enforcement agencies and fisheries authorities to begin to access and utilize more of the available networks, tools and techniques, to inter alia, improve intelligence and Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), to effectively fight IUU fishing and transnational organized crime in the fishing industry, thereby contributing to the creation of a fair blue economy for the people of the Caribbean.

## **THE BLUE JUSTICE INITIATIVE AND COPENHAGEN DECLARATION**

10. High-level support and participation in all the countries is critical to ensuring success in this international effort.
11. Through the Blue Justice Initiative, the CARICOM region will contribute to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration, as well as the global efforts to address the challenges described therein.
12. The overall goal of the initiative is to work towards a sustainable and fair blue economy, free from fisheries crime.
13. Building a healthy blue economy is at the core of the initiative.
14. There are several projects under the Blue Justice Initiative, including:
  - a. The Blue Resilience Project
  - b. The Blue Justice Community
  - c. Blue Fairness
  - d. Blue Enforcement
  - e. Blue Footprints
  - f. Blue Justice International Tracking Center
15. “Digital Services and Government Cooperation in the Blue Justice Initiative”— the Government of Norway has made an online platform available to developing countries to facilitate inter-agency collaboration in combating fisheries crime. The digital tools had been created and is being utilized by Norway to achieve interagency cooperation nationally.
16. Trinidad and Tobago, which has joined the Blue Justice Community, is the first CRFM Member State to utilize the tool.
17. This tool connects partners to do collaborative work, even if they are in different parts of the world.
18. The Blue Justice International Tracking Center which is located in Norway, and managed by the Norwegian Coast Guard and Fisheries authorities, provides information on the movement of vessels available to developing countries.
19. It has an operations room, where Automatic Identification System (AIS) signals collected from satellites and other stations are analyzed. It provides tracks that are shared through the digital platform. Participating countries can request assistance from analysts in Norway.



20. This initiative provides an opportunity for colleagues and countries to work together and break down barriers in operational work.
21. The Blue Justice Community provides digital tools for secure intergovernmental cooperation. It provides law enforcement agencies with tools to cooperate in fighting fisheries crime.
22. This platform may also be used internally, within an institution or country, to facilitate secure internal communication between colleagues.
23. Through Blue Enforcement, Sri Lanka seized 300 kilos of dried shark fins and 250 kilos of dry manta ray gills in 2021, with the assistance of UNODC.
24. The Blue Fairness project, which is overseen by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is developing a questionnaire to collect information on the prevalence of human trafficking and a methodology to estimate prevalence in different countries. A test site is needed.
25. The detection of suspected vessels is done using satellites. The Blue Justice Community was not yet using artificial intelligence (AI), although there are some notable developments in the use of AI, such as the WINDWARD application recently acquired and used by CARICOM IMPACS.
26. The intent is to assess the needs of participating countries as well as the gaps, and to determine measures that should be taken to improve the system.

## Caribbean Forum on Maritime Crime held in February 2022





## THE UNDP BLUE RESILIENCE PROJECT: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

27. The UNDP's Blue Resilience project, funded by the Norwegian Blue Justice Initiative, is a global development project whose aim is to support government responses to fisheries crime. The project is housed at the UNDP's Nordic Representation Office (NRO) in Copenhagen, Denmark.

28. The UNDP NRO works in close collaboration with the UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre (OGC), based in Norway.

29. The project objectives are to support national partners to achieve SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), in addition to others such as SDGs 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 8 (decent work and economic growth), and 14 (life below water).



30. The project's objectives are achieved through three country-led steps: map, prioritize, act – which is the Blue Resilience “CO-LAB” (collaboration laboratory) method for strengthening resilience to fisheries crime.

31. The initial mapping is intended to enhance understanding of the problem. It is country-specific and country-led. The project works with national partners to review, revise and repeat the process.

32. The project facilitates access to digital tools for collaboration.

33. Through the UNDP's administration of the Blue Justice Community, partners are able to receive seamless institutional support as well as improve Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) through access to tracking data and analytical services.

34. Through the project, the UNDP NRO assists with the sharing of knowledge on fisheries crimes as well as facilitating discussions on the subject matter.

35. It can also facilitate and host digital technical workshops for knowledge transfer exchange, training, etc.

## **TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES TO DETECT AND ANALYSE FISHERIES CRIME (CRIME MAPPING)**

### **THE CO-LAB**

36. The CO-LAB is based on the experiences acquired through years of fieldwork.
37. Crime mapping lies at the core of the work. Mapping assists with clarifying the problem and providing a clearer understanding.
38. In the process of finding out which authorities are willing to collaborate, new agencies are sometimes brought onboard.
39. The CO-LAB fisheries mapping exercise assessed the greatest fisheries crime threats.
40. The UNODC published a report in 2011 on [Transnational Organized Crime in the Fishing Industry with a focus on human trafficking](#). The study was on the agenda of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly.
41. The UNODC study analyzed the problem of human trafficking in the fisheries sector, to determine the actions that could be taken to address the matter. The study also assessed who has a role and a stake in the criminal activity.
42. Out of the study, a new toolbox to help prevent human trafficking was made available to the States and to victims.
43. The effort led to:
  - a. The detention of 10 tuna vessels by South African authorities for illegal fishing and slave labor in 2014;
  - b. The interception of ghost vessels which are duplicates of legitimate vessels; and
  - c. The discovery of cases involving underpaid and illtreated workers in 2014 and 2015.
44. Personnel at the vessel tracking center and the police mapped vessel activities and saw connections between companies that were partaking in severe labor abuses. Authorities were successful in stopping those criminal operations.

45. Although Interpol has been involved in some cases, countries can join in taking actions. For example, Purple Notices<sup>2</sup> for illegal fishing may be issued by Norway and other countries either with or without Interpol.
46. Through mapping, a vessel was successfully stopped in 2015, after having been tracked for nearly 4 months. The Nigerian-flagged vessel, Thunder, was interdicted through a combination of domestic, high seas, and port state interventions.
47. Norway worked closely with Nigeria, which had interest in seeing the vessel stopped. In the process, they also worked closely with the developers of the Blue Justice Tracking Tool on integrating the necessary features to monitor and assess the vessel's movements.
48. The Blue Justice Tracking Tool is said to be among the best such tools known in the world today.
49. The Multilateral Investigative Support Team (MIST), a team of analysts, was constituted to assist with document analysis. It was found that document fraud is the central *modus operandi* of persons and entities involved in transnational organized crime in fisheries cases. Canada provided computer analysis support for Indonesian authorities.
50. Through the CO-LAB, which involves more than 80 participants, countries worked together to identify document fraud and to operationalize mutual legal assistance to address document fraud.
51. A mapping exercise uses a commodity flow chart which spans the entire fisheries value chain. Through this process, an analysis is done to break down each segment of the value chain, to determine the specific crimes linked with those parts.
52. A hypothesis is developed, capturing the greatest crime threats in the capture fisheries (for example, in pelagic fisheries, the landing of fish, or export).
53. The information gathered is used to develop situational reports, to increase understanding of the value chain's panorama. This also feeds into intelligence reports, which provide information on specific actors which should be prioritized and their activities.
54. This process enables prioritization and more targeted actions, which result in more efficient resource use.



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<sup>2</sup> Interpol issues Purple Notices to seek or provide information on *modus operandi*, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals. (<https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Notices/About-Notices>, accessed March 2022)

55. It also enables extrapolations and the development of indicators to determine the greatest crime threats. An example is the Norwegian national crime threat assessment (the [Police Threat Assessment of 2021](#)), which includes a section on illegal fishing.
56. The report addresses illegal fishing and underreporting of catches, which camouflages illegal fishing.
57. The assessment also provides detailed information on the scale of threats, as well as a prediction of future illegal activities. It adds a “problem owner,” which may elaborate on aspects of economic crimes or environmental crimes that undermine the management of sustainable fisheries. In Norway, the problem is more economic than environmental.
58. Essential elements for crime mapping are interagency and cross border collaboration, as well as maritime domain awareness – MDA, which are supported by the Blue Justice Community.
59. MDA enables better understanding of the vessels operating in the marine space and empowers authorities to distinguish between normal and abnormal behavior for those vessels, depending on their fishing activities and area of operations.

## **THE BLUE JUSTICE TRACKING CENTER**

60. In Norway, authorities are very dependent on landings information, but tracking information acquired via VMS and satellites are also used. The primary ones used are owned by Norway.
61. Official records on licenses, vessel types and gear are also used, in addition to radar imagery and open-source internet information accessed through ShipSpotting, WebCamera, port info, and others.
62. In Norway, landings information must be filled out using a computer and authorities have immediate access to the information submitted.
63. There are approximately 1 million registered AIS positions in the Caribbean per week.
64. Satellite data is combined with tracking information to provide more insights.
65. It is not very common for fisheries vessels to turn off their tracking devices in the Eastern Atlantic. The identity of those vessels that do can be discovered through other surveillance mechanisms.
66. Some harbors have port information. Some Port Authorities share information on the internet about the kind of vessels in the area and their activities.

67. There must be a system in place to store the information acquired. Features provided through this Blue Justice Initiative include:
  - a. Data storage
  - b. Export of data
  - c. Data visualization using maps, charts, etc.
  - d. Geometries (lines and polygons)
68. Police, Coast Guard, and Tax authorities can use the tools to share information easily.
69. Maps display information clearly. The polygons are used for analysis as well as to generate alerts of activities in the specified area.
70. Criteria used to analyze registered tracking information include vessel speed (for example, below 5 knots), proximity to other vessels (which may indicate transshipment), movement patterns, periods with no tracking information, as well as the movement of unknown objects in maritime space with a pattern indicating fishing activity. Tracking can also help to detect fishing in protected areas.
71. The tracking platform allows data export for analysis in other applications, such as Microsoft Excel. There is also the option to save tracking information. It also enables the use of filters to visualize color-coded tracks, print screens for capturing varying map positions, and generation of density plots. For example, a density plot was generated of a vessel sailing in the Caribbean during 2021.
72. The monitoring features of the tracking system enables alerts to be sent when suspicious activities are detected such as when a vessel crosses a line, arrives at a defined area, departs an area, or is close to another vessel.
73. In Norway, information is sent via VMS and satellites. In Europe, authorities use the automatic identification system (AIS), which transmits a ship's position. The US has good port data.

## **FISHERIES CRIME IN THE CARIBBEAN**

74. In May 2019, the CARICOM technical working group on maritime security in the Caribbean developed an output document on the priority actions to strengthen regional maritime law enforcement cooperation and coordination among Caribbean States. This document contained 27 objectives: 19 short-term, 6 medium-term, and 2 long-term objectives.
75. The following are some of those priority actions:
- a. Identify opportunities to improve MDA;
  - b. Update legislation to account for emerging maritime threats and to facilitate national prosecutions for interdiction on the high seas; and
  - c. Create a public awareness campaign to demonstrate the importance of maritime domain awareness and its security for optimal returns from the blue economy.
76. CARICOM IMPACS collaborates closely with the RSS. The collaboration efforts have been extended to other entities that are not typically included in the security architecture or cluster, including the CRFM.
77. After the output document with priority actions was developed, the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. Aviation traffic declined to as low as 4% of the previous year's level, which enabled CARICOM IMPACS to spend more time on the maritime area.
78. A paper was written on **Unmasking Trends in Maritime Crime in the Caribbean**<sup>3</sup>. The analysis found that whereas overall maritime traffic reduced almost 50% (presumably as a consequence of the mobility restrictions implemented during COVID-19 pandemic), the level of crime did not decline to a degree that was commensurate with that reduction.
79. The acquisition of an MDA system in March of 2021 enabled greater insights into activities in the maritime space, particularly with respect to the vessels using the AIS and their activities in maritime spaces.
80. Interest was expressed in a project on human trafficking in the maritime domain and efforts are to be made to seek further information on pursuing this interest.
81. CARICOM IMPACS manages, on behalf of the Member States, an advanced passenger information system, which enables access to the data of each person onboard aircraft and maritime vessels transiting the region. Cargo vessels were recently added for 5 of its Member States which have legislation to support submission of the data.

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<sup>3</sup>Authors are Dr. Ian Ralby, I.R. Consilium; Lt. Col. Michael Jones, The Caribbean Community's Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS); and Capt. (N) Errington Shurland (ret.), Regional Security System (RSS)



83. Fisheries crimes detected in the region are intrinsically transnational. These include:
  - a. IUU fishing
  - b. Money laundering
  - c. Trafficking of illicit commodities including trafficking and smuggling of humans
  - d. Shielding from liability (and the identity of the real owners)
84. Other transnational organized criminal activities include the use of fishing vessels for piracy and armed robbery, corruption (including the non-enforcement of laws for bribes), and tax evasion.
85. Over 11,000 suspected IUU fishing events were recorded during April and October 2021 across 18 countries, with high numbers recorded for Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.
86. Venezuelan and Chinese fishing vessels were primarily responsible for the high incidences in some parts of the region.
87. Some Caribbean countries have significant ship registries. Some vessels do not carry the flags from Member States. The use of “flags of convenience” from Caribbean countries is a cause for concern. An estimated 14,000 are listed for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines—the largest proportion among the Caribbean countries assessed. It was not specified how many of these vessels were registered and/or operating as fishing vessels.
88. CARICOM IMPACS generates an array of reports that include:
  - a. Vessel of interest daily reporting for the EEZ
  - b. High-risk vessels located in the French EEZ
  - c. Due diligence vessels of interest report for Member States
  - d. Fishing vessel notifications
89. A dedicated desk is to be established to generate vessel of interest reports for Member States.
90. Frequent changes in Maritime Mobile Service Identities (MMSIs) and turning off an AIS signal are examples of actions that could raise the profile for a vessel to be flagged as a vessel of interest. Member States can identify vessels of interest. Data is inputted to system to generate future reports.
91. In the region, preset MDA algorithms, open-source data, and other forms of information form a part of the intelligence cycle. Member States can contribute and also receive feedback and notifications, particularly with respect to high-risk situations.
92. Through systems triangulation, there is a consolidation of all tools at the region’s disposal to generate a hit.

93. Not all Member States have vessel management systems (for Security / ‘Safety of Life at Sea’ or SOLAS), although such systems would help to improve operations, especially in situations where vessels are moving across Member States.
94. Partnerships, resources and tools to improve maritime domain awareness would bolster the region’s capacity.
95. This regional technical meeting, hosted in partnership with the CRFM, is critical to the multisectoral approach to address the problem of transnational organized crime and illegal fishing. A common platform for information sharing is needed.
96. Enforcement of laws is critical and must be improved. There also needs to be more awareness of existing legislation.
97. There are several similarities in the concepts of CARICOM and Norway. There would be benefits to combining the layers of information available to the partners to provide a more comprehensive intelligence view, and this added information can help to advance processes and improve detection of high-risk vessels.
98. Reference was made to the [North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group](#) (NA-FIG), which facilitates cooperation between customs, fisheries, food safety, police, and tax crime organizations and provides intelligence and training to relevant international organizations, national and international academies and agencies. They issued a report a few years ago on their analysis of flag states. It was observed that statelessness was one of the biggest vessel categories, globally.
99. Through the AIS analysis done in the Indian Ocean, a large fleet of vessels purportedly from the Vatican State was found, although those vessels may also be stateless or may have used the Vatican flag to camouflage their true identity.
100. Some years ago, a vessel was observed sailing in international waters as a Libyan vessel. Through international cooperation, access was granted to the purported registration document, which was subsequently determined to be fraudulent.
101. Cooperation at the national, regional and international levels would provide support for the verification of documentation as well as information provided through the tracking services.



## **FEEDBACK FROM CARIBBEAN USER COUNTRIES OF THE BLUE JUSTICE COMMUNITY**

### *Use cases in the Caribbean*

#### A. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

102. Trinidad and Tobago joined the Blue Justice Community in April 2021.
103. It is a member of the Caribbean Cooperation Forum and the Trinidad and Tobago Cooperation Forum in the Community. The latter Forum was created in September 2021.
104. This has enabled Trinidad and Tobago to communicate with the Blue Justice Secretariat. The Trinidad and Tobago Cooperation Forum includes only staff of the Fisheries Division, but the intention is to invite other agencies that address fisheries crime to join the Forum.
105. The platform allows easy log-in. Users have access to tutorials and a growing content library. The platform was developed to serve as a one-stop-shop for access to resources to address fisheries crime.
106. The Blue Justice Community portal has materials available to help users design a workshop to build capacity within their organization.
107. Some resources mentioned were
  - a. [Chasing Red Herrings](#)
  - b. [Evading the Net: Tax Crime in the Fisheries Sector](#)
  - c. [Discussion document on Smuggling of goods and human smuggling in the Caribbean, the role of the fisheries sector](#)
  - d. [Rotten Fish](#)
  - e. [Transnational Organized Crime in the Fishing Industry with a focus on human trafficking](#)
108. Map tools on the platform allow for interactivity. They include a drag and drop feature to add data (in GeoJson, TopoJson, GPX, and kml formats) and requests can be made for additional layers.
109. Countries that join the Blue Justice Community can create their own group with specific people to exchange information securely. Access to the group can be controlled.
110. Photos, videos, messages and other files can also be uploaded to the group and managed in one location. Accepted file formats include .pdf, .jpg, .png, and .xls.

111. Users of the platform have access to experts at the Blue Justice Tracking Center. Routine reports are generated on fishing vessels and additional reporting is done as needed.
112. Trinidad and Tobago was able to utilize the resources for monitoring fishing activities within the EEZ. Indicators used for tracking are based on the type of activities or movement patterns (including speeds of under 5 knots), as well as vessel type.
113. Open-source tools are also used to find information on vessels, including their names.
114. All CRFM countries were invited to register with the Blue Justice Community.
115. It was noted that the Blue Justice Tracking Center can provide a regional track for the use of Caribbean countries through a Caribbean cooperation group in the Blue Justice Community.
116. This regional track was said to be more beneficial than individual tracks for each country. It would allow all CRFM Member States to have access to tracks of potential fishing activities in the area. This can be provided by the Blue Justice Initiative. The CRFM will consider the recommendation.
117. Member States interested in joining the Blue Justice Community should contact the Blue Justice Secretariat. An access form will be provided, which requires that the government representative to be selected to join the Community receive the official approval from the person in the next level of command in their institution.
118. The completed form would be e-mailed to the Blue Justice Secretariat. After it is deposited and processed, the applicant would be able to register as a user of the platform. Basic guidance would be provided on how the user can benefit from the platform.
119. Trinidad and Tobago is still new to the platform and hopes to have case studies to share at the next regional technical engagement.

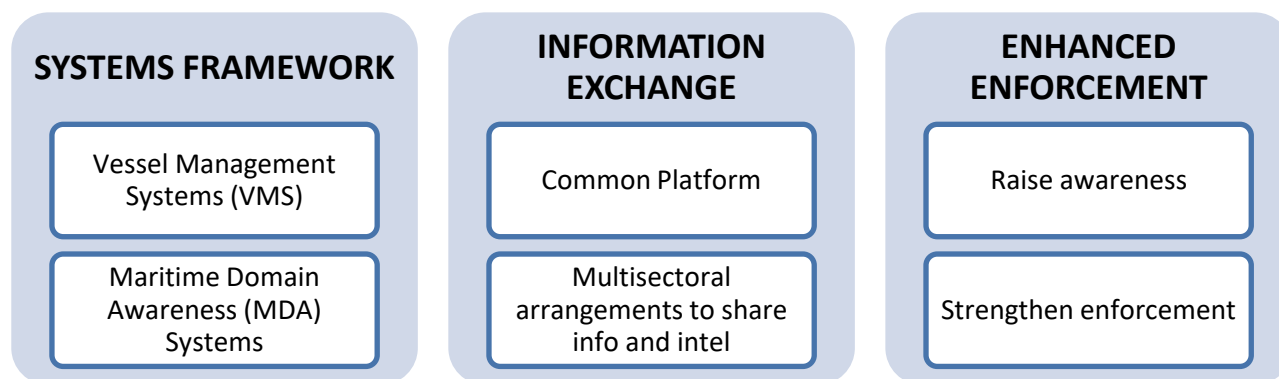
#### B. MONTSERRAT

120. Montserrat has integrated VMS into its Ocean Governance and Management System to combat IUU fishing and criminal activities. Its objective is to support the global fight against IUU fishing and transnational organized crime.
121. Montserrat was the beneficiary of support provided by the Government of the UK through a partnership agreement with The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), through which funds were transferred to enable Montserrat to introduce the VMS as a fisheries management tool in 2016. The devices also assist with search and rescue efforts.

122. The VMS devices were procured from [Pelagic Data System](#) of the USA. Twenty-five (25) vessels (a fraction of the national fleet) have been equipped with VMS units in Montserrat. The vessels are small-scale and are less than 12 meters in length.
123. This has provided Montserrat authorities with real-time information on vessel movements within the waters under its national jurisdiction and has helped to advance its legislative framework.
124. Montserrat's Fisheries authority partners with the Royal Montserrat Police Service for joint patrol operations. Local community involvement has also proved critical in intercepting illegal activities in the area.
125. Montserrat joined the Blue Justice Community in February 2022. Jamaica has also joined the Blue Justice Community.
126. Montserrat is one of several countries in the region whose small-scale fisheries constitute the vast majority of fishing vessels. For some Caribbean countries, the proportion of vessels regarded as small-scale is as high as 95%.

## DISCUSSION

127. CARICOM IMPACS is in the process of developing a regional Maritime Security Strategy for CARICOM.
128. The following matrix captures the areas of prioritization set out by CARICOM IMPACS and served as a reference point for discussing the way forward:



129. The critical aspects to be addressed within the broad regional framework to address IUU Fishing and Transnational Organized Crime arising out of the presentations and discussions are:
- Document fraud
  - Mapping exercise / assessment
  - Application of a comprehensive value chain and supply chain approach
  - Stateless vessels
  - Flag states vessels
  - Joining the Blue Justice Community
  - Improving maritime domain awareness
  - Development of a regional track / regional forum under the Blue Justice Community
  - Inclusion of small-scale fishing vessels
  - Low coverage of VMS on small vessels
130. Both the national and regional tracks should be pursued for collaboration and cooperation. CARICOM policymakers have already made a commitment to regional collaboration in security matters with the establishment of RSS, CARICOM IMPACS, and the CRFM.
131. The best approach would be to advance the process as a region, and that building a network of colleagues within the Blue Justice Community could be a first step.
132. Taking a regional approach would also simplify the reporting process and the generation of products from the Tracking Center, as it would not have to generate 17 or 18 different

- reports for individual states and the region. It was acknowledged, nonetheless, that individual countries could follow up with the Tracking Center on specific issues.
133. Maritime enforcement is already being coordinated at regional and bilateral levels. Although there may be nuances at a national level, countries can learn from each other.
  134. CARICOM IMPACS has been sharing information with the CRFM Secretariat and CRFM Member States, and the Blue Justice Tracking Center can build on the work of CARICOM IMPACS to support the region's efforts to address IUU fishing and transnational organized crime in the fishing industry.
  135. Maritime Domain Awareness is also critical in the context of the recent delimitation of the boundaries of Saint Lucia with Barbados and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The awareness of fishers of this information can have an impact on how and where they fish.
  136. Challenges with coordination at both the national and regional levels, especially for fisheries related matters, need to be addressed.
  137. Although traditionally Fisheries authorities were developed to manage the sector, they are also expected to develop their ability to enforce laws addressing fisheries and related crimes.
  138. In order to strengthen the region's response to illegal fishing and other related crime, capacity building needs to go beyond the individual and address the need to expand the ability of the institutions to have strengthened enforcement arms with personnel dedicated to coordinating with Customs and Police enforcement personnel.
  139. Legislative frameworks also need to be updated to ensure that the respective authorities can effectively carry out their functions and mandates.
  140. Maritime Divisions and Customs should be brought into the framework of partners to address IUU fishing and transnational organized crime in the fishing industry.
  141. Some CRFM countries are not eligible for ODA funding, i.e., they are not on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) list of countries eligible to receive Official Development Assistance (ODA). However, using a regional approach would enable the sharing of benefits to countries not eligible for receiving ODA.
  142. A Caribbean threat analysis or a crime mapping exercise should be done with partners, taking onboard the value chain approach within the maritime domain, with national, regional, and international scopes.
  143. Tax authorities need to be brought into the framework, due to the economic activities at sea and issues associated with tax evasion. Food safety authorities should also be included in the process.

144. Tax authorities are interested in knowing who the funders and the beneficial owners of operations are, and the kind of licenses connected with them. The North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group is an example of cooperation in this regard. It was established to create a forum to stimulate international cooperation among authorities.
145. There are different supply chains across the fishing industry, and several issues become evident in assessments that “follow the fish” from the sea to the markets: how it is landed, processed, and shipped across borders, and sometimes the recorded species identity is changed along the chain. Access to Customs documentation can be crucial in value chain assessments.
146. Member States are urged to generate their own supply chains diagrams, to better understand their context. The North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group can assist with setting up workshops to study the gamut of fisheries value chains.
147. The approach outlined is consistent with the approach of the Caribbean over the past few years. Some countries have made Customs officers authorized officers under their fisheries authorities to support enforcement efforts. There have also been efforts to find ways to address taxation issues.
148. It was recognized that the region has inadequate resources to address these illegal and criminal activities.
149. There are also information gaps with respect to the operations of vessels at sea. For example, Guyana receives daily reports on vessels in its waters, but it does not get the name of the vessels or their approximate location. They also need enforcement personnel to ensure that they can effectively act upon the information received.
150. Guyana intends to submit its completed request form to join the Blue Justice Community by the end of March 2022.
151. Belize had also piloted a VMS for a portion of its small-scale fisheries fleet in 2020 but would like to see more emphasis on tracking small-scale vessels, particularly those involved in IUU fishing activities. Belize’s high seas fishing vessels are being tracked.
152. The region can draw lessons from Montserrat and its arrangement for tracking small-scale fishing vessels using VMS systems acquired from Pelagic Data Systems.
153. The CARICOM Secretariat is interested in supporting efforts under the Blue Fairness project, to identify a test site and to administer its questionnaire to gather information on the prevalence of human trafficking in the fishing sector and a methodology to estimate prevalence in different countries.

## NEXT STEPS

The following are the priorities and next steps mapped out at the regional technical meeting:

154. Prioritize small-scale fisheries, which are critical within the Caribbean context, and expand the utilization of VMS for the small-scale fleet, particularly given their vulnerability to being exploited as a cover for nefarious activities. Nearly 25,000 small-scale fishing vessels operate within the region, and some are used by illegal operators in the last leg of their operations. There is a need to ensure law and order in the sector.
155. Follow up with the Blue Justice Initiative and the Blue Resilience Project to advance the region's engagement on its combined approach to addressing IUU fishing and transnational organized crime in the fishing industry;
156. Follow-up with the Blue Fairness Project on identifying a test site for its human trafficking questionnaire and study to better understand the extent of the problem in the region;
157. Urge all countries to register with the Blue Justice Community, which provides clear benefits for the region;
158. Pursue learning experiences with the North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group;  
  
Support regional approaches to working with the BJI building on existing policy commitments to regionalism in promoting sustainable fisheries and improving security
159. Conduct assessment and mapping to improve understanding of the fisheries crime processes using a holistic supply chain approach to ensure effective response;
160. In the assessments and mapping exercise, the nexus must be made with taxation, and the need to determine the beneficial owners and funders of IUU fishing and TNOC operations.
161. Urge countries to sign the ILO [Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 \(#188\)](#) or ILO C-188, which could help to address slavery and human trafficking in the sector, which are sometimes associated with IUU fishing and transnational organized crime;
162. Improve awareness and understanding of the importance of ILO C-188 and how it can help to fight organized crime in the fisheries sector;
163. Strengthen the capacity of the countries to act upon the information received, with emphasis on both enforcement and prosecution capacities.
164. Enhanced use of available tracking and analytical tools to improve maritime domain awareness in the region.



## CLOSING

165. Although there must be an emphasis on the challenges faced with tracking small-scale fisheries vessels, it is important to go beyond tracing domestic activities and to map and assess the activities of international and regional foreign fishing vessels through to sale / exports on the foreign markets, to which the products are often destined. This must form part of the comprehensive assessment utilizing a holistic supply chain approach.
166. The most effective way to disrupt criminal activities may not be at-sea enforcement, and this would require collaboration with Customs or border management / security agencies. The analysis will provide important information to determine the most efficient and effective response including which authorities are best positioned to disrupt the activities and to deter and prevent IUU fishing and crime.
167. International cooperation is a very powerful tool, particularly with respect to activities on the world seas. Many vessels operating in the Caribbean are also operating in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, or in the North Atlantic. Cooperation on specific cases or on general initiatives would bolster the region's effectiveness.
168. This Regional Technical Meeting on IUU Fishing and Transnational Organized Crime has served to advance the region's efforts to build both regional and international cooperation. The Government of Norway has committed to working together with the region towards this end.
169. Caribbean policymakers continue to be engaged on the high priority matter of IUU fishing and transnational organized crime in the fishing industry. They recognize and understand the gravity of the problem as well as the myriad challenges that confront the region in trying to tackle the problem.
170. The region will move forward in addressing the priorities and next steps identified and will be following up with colleagues under the Blue Justice Initiative as well as the Government of Norway to implement the agreed next steps.
171. Significant progress has been achieved since the region was engaged on the matter of IUU fishing and transnational organized crime at the international meeting held in December of 2020. The region looks forward to strengthening collaboration.
172. The CRFM, CARICOM IMPACS, and their Member States are grateful to the Government of Norway for supporting the overall initiative to assist countries to address the intractable problem of IUU fishing and transnational organized crime in the fishing industry.





## **Towards Sustainable Development of Fisheries for the People of the Caribbean**

The CRFM is an inter-governmental organisation whose mission is to “Promote and facilitate the responsible utilisation of the region’s fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region”. The CRFM consists of three bodies – the Ministerial Council, the Caribbean Fisheries Forum and the CRFM Secretariat.

CRFM members are Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and The Turks and Caicos Islands.

### **CRFM Secretariat**

Princess Margaret Drive  
P.O. Box 642  
Belize City, BELIZE

Tel: 501-223-4443

Fax: 501-223-4446

[https://crfm.int/  
secretariat@crfm.int](https://crfm.int/secretariat@crfm.int)



### **CARICOM IMPACS**

Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) is part of the Regional Framework for Crime and Security. It was established by the Twenty Seventh Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in July 2006, in Bird Rock, Saint Kitts and Nevis, as the implementation arm of a new Regional Architecture to manage CARICOM’s action agenda on crime and security.

The mandate of CARICOM IMPACS is being delivered through its Agency Headquarters, located in Trinidad and Tobago; the Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC) - a sub-agency located in Barbados; and the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre (RIFC) - a sub-agency located in Trinidad and Tobago. It has 17 Member States, almost all of which are also Member States of the CRFM.

### **CARICOM IMPACS**

19 Keate Street  
Port of Spain  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Tel: (868) 235-5511

Fax: (868) 627-3064

[https://caricomimpacs.org/  
secretariat@carimpacs.org](https://caricomimpacs.org/secretariat@carimpacs.org)