



DECLARATION ON CRFM-OSPESCA COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE RESOURCES

Belize City, Belize, 2 October 2019

PREAMBLE

The Ministers responsible for Fisheries and Aquaculture, or their duly accredited representatives of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA) of the Central American Integration System (SICA);

Recognizing the important role of fisheries and aquaculture in ensuring food and nutrition security, employment creation, livelihoods, and trade for Caribbean and Central American States;

Acknowledging that the international instruments related to fisheries and elaborated in the context of the United Nations provide the overall legal framework and principles for sustainable development, conservation and management of living marine resources and protection and preservation of the marine environment;

Acknowledging also the commitments made by the Heads of State and Government, as expressed in the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in particular, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 on the conservation, and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development;

Recalling that at the Third CARICOM-SICA Summit of Heads of State and Government held in San Salvador, El Salvador on 19 August 2011, the SICA and CARICOM Secretariats were instructed, through the CRFM and OSPESCA, to convene a high level meeting between the ministers responsible for fisheries and aquaculture of CRFM and OSPESCA "aimed at strengthening collaboration between both regional fisheries organizations to improve conservation, management and sustainable development of the living marine resources of the Caribbean Sea";

Recalling also that in response to the decision of the Third CARICOM-SICA Summit of Heads of State and Government, the First CRFM-OSPESCA Joint Meeting of Ministers responsible for Fisheries and Aquaculture was held in Belize City, Belize on 3 - 4 September 2012, and approved the "Joint Action Plan" setting out the priority areas for cooperation between the CRFM and OSPESCA;

YOB.
W.O.
B.W.

N.I.L.M

HLT

1

QTT
MOM



Noting that, within the framework of the Joint Action Plan, the CRFM and OSPESCA have worked harmoniously on issues related to the main fisheries in the region such as Caribbean spiny lobster, queen conch and pelagic fish, as well as to combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fisheries;

Noting also that progress has been made in implementing the Joint Action Plan agreed upon at the First Joint CRFM-OSPESCA Meeting but that significant challenges continue to constrain the sustainable use, management and conservation of the marine living resources, and sustainable development of aquaculture;

Recalling that the politically endorsed 10-year Strategic Action Programme for the wider Caribbean region (CLME+ SAP, 2015-2025), developed with the support of the UNDP/GEF CLME Project, provides an over-arching roadmap for sustainable marine resources management, and the commitment of the Member States of the CRFM and OSPESCA to the vision and priority actions of the SAP;

Recalling also that CRFM, OSPESCA and FAO/WECAFC have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Interim Coordination on Sustainable Fisheries in the Wider Caribbean region with the aim of improving regional governance arrangement for sustainable fisheries;

Recognizing the importance of the effects of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture and on fishing communities in the region, as well as disaster risk management in these activities;

Aware that the Caribbean region is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to impacts of climate change, and deeply concerned that climate change and ocean acidification are already having negative impacts on fishing communities, the health of coastal and marine ecosystems, and will significantly affect the distribution, abundance, seasonality, sustainability fisheries in the Caribbean;

Desiring to strengthen cooperation between our organisations to improve long-term sustainable use of the living marine resources and enhancing the contribution they make to food and nutrition security, employment creation, international trade, and the economic and social well-being of the people of the region.

DECLARE

1. **Reaffirm** our commitment to build and consolidate the foundations for ecosystem-based management and sustainable use of the living marine

KH
60. K
B.W.

N. I. L. M

HLT

2

9
H. H.



resources of the Caribbean Sea for the economic and social well-being of the people of the region.

2. **Approve** the Second Joint CRFM-OSPESCA Action Plan, 2020 to 2025, as a roadmap to guide collaborative programmes and activities between the two sub-regional organisation.
3. **Agree** that the Second Joint CRFM-OSPESCA Action Plan will give priority to addressing:
 - a. Implementation of the regional plans for improved conservation and management of shared stocks such as spiny lobster, queen conch and migratory pelagic fish stocks;
 - b. Implementation of the regional action plan to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing through cooperation and strengthening of monitoring, control and surveillance systems;
 - c. Implementation of harmonized traceability programs for fisheries and aquaculture products;
 - d. Development of sustainable aquaculture;
 - e. Development and implementation of policies and programmes on climate change adaptation and disaster risk management in fisheries and aquaculture; and
 - f. Development of ocean-based fisheries and aquaculture economic activities including through value chain development.
4. **Agree also** that the Joint Action Plan will also address, *inter alia*:
 - a. Development and implementation of management plans for other shared fishery resources;
 - b. Controlling invasive species with emphasis on the Pacific lionfish (*Pterois volitans* and *P. miles*) invasion;
 - c. The development potential of unutilized and underutilized resources; strengthening of intra-regional trade in fish and fishery products;
 - d. The mobilization of resources for training, technology transfer and capacity development;
 - e. Small-scale fisheries development including livelihoods and food security;
 - f. Exchange of information and cooperation on international and regional processes including the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations on fisheries subsidies, and the United Nations Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ);
 - g. Monitoring and management of Sargassum blooms;
 - h. Strengthening of relations among WECAFC, CRFM and OSPESCA through existing collaboration mechanisms; and
 - i. Collaborating on the WECAFC reorientation process.

Kol
B. W.

N. J. L. M

HLT

3

Handwritten signatures and initials on the right margin.



5. **Promote and encourage** the joint development and implementation of "Climate-Smart Plans for the Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture", as well as synergistic actions between the CARICOM and SICA related to disaster risk management and prevention that will include fishing and aquaculture activities and fishing communities.
6. **Agree** to work together, including through the Interim Fisheries Coordination Mechanism established with the support of the UNDP-GEF funded CLME+ Project, to formalize a relationship of understanding and cooperation between CRFM and OSPESCA for the execution of joint actions agreed upon by both organisations.
7. **Support** for improved governance and management of the region's shared living marine resources, as outlined under the 10 year (2015 – 2025) politically endorsed Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme (CLME+ SAP), and for the continued contributions of the CRFM and OSPESCA and their Member States in the Coordination Mechanisms for Ocean Governance in a coordinated and collaborative approach towards Ocean Governance in the Wider Caribbean/CLME+ region.
8. **Agree** to cooperate with the aim of developing common positions for presentation at relevant regional and international meetings related to fisheries, aquaculture, trade in fish and fishery products, marine conservation and matters related to oceans and seas, including, *inter alia*, the "Intergovernmental Conference on a legally binding international instrument in the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdictions", World Trade Organization negotiations on fisheries subsidies, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in respect of the listing of marine species.
9. **Promote** and work towards the joint development and implementation of a Common Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and joint projects to promote ocean-based economic growth, including development of value chains, that contribute to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture resources and improvement in the quality of life and welfare of the people of our Member States.
10. **Urge** States to give consideration to ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to relevant international fisheries agreements, related to the conservation, management and sustainable use of the living marine resources, protection of the marine environment and ecosystems, and prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
11. **Call upon** donor partners and cooperating organizations to provide technical and financial support for the implementation of the Second Joint CRFM/OSPESCA Action Plan.

N. J. L. M

HLT 4



12. **Thank** the UNDP/GEF Project "CLME+: Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of Shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems", for the support provided to the CRFM, OSPESCA, FAO/WECAFC and other regional organisations to strengthen arrangements for improved governance and management of the fisheries resources of the region.
13. **Thank** the government and people of Belize for promoting and collaborating in the realization of this second joint meeting between the Ministers responsible for fisheries and aquaculture of CRFM and OSPESCA to advance mutual understanding and cooperation for sustainable use of the living marine resources and development of aquaculture in the Caribbean region.

Sign: by Ministers or Heads of Delegation,

Barbados

Belize

Dominican Republic

El Salvador

Grenada

Guatemala

N. I. L. M

HLT

5



SICA
Sistema de la Integración
Centroamericana

Guyana

Jamaica

Nicaragua

Panamá

Saint Kitts and Nevis

Saint Lucia

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

N. I. L. M