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**REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION TO
LAUNCH A NATIONAL FISHERFOLK ORGANIZATION
IN ST. KITTS AND NEVIS**

**CRFM Secretariat, Belize
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**Report of the National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk
Organization in St. Kitts and Nevis**

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Report of the National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization
in St. Kitts and Nevis

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1.0 Introduction

The Secretariat of the Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), in its efforts to promote co-management of fisheries in the Caribbean region and to enhance the overall capacity of the resource users for their involvement and participation in the resource management process, has implemented a series of activities aimed at realizing this objective.

In 2003/04 CTA/CARDI/CRFM embarked upon a capacity building programme to empower fisher folk in the region and to enable them to take up their role as partners with government as it related to fisheries resource management and development in the Caribbean region. In this regard, the CRFM conducted an organizational needs assessment study aimed at determining the strengths, weaknesses and status of fisher folk organizations in the member states and recommended strategies for addressing the needs identified.

Upon review of the said recommendations at a CTA/CARDI/CRFM Regional Workshop held in Belize from October 12-14, 2004, a specific recommendation was made to launch a Regional Network of National Fisherfolk Organizations (CARNUFO). This proposed body would be comprised of National Fisherfolk Organizations (NFO) establishing relationships and linkages to form a network geared towards capacity building and institutional strengthening among the fisher folk organizations of the Caribbean region, with the overall objective being to improve earnings, foster higher standards of living of fisher folk and sustainable use of fishery resources in the Caribbean. It was determined that CARNUFO could only be established when at least 50% of the ACP countries + 1 would have NFOs.

In June 2005 a Strategy and Medium Term Action Plan 2006 – 2010 was developed for the institutional strengthening of Regional Fisher folk Organizations. It was aimed at addressing issues such as lack of critical mass for establishing CARNUFO, insufficient access to information, weak management skills and limited communication and advocacy skills of fisher folk organizations. In this regard a proposal was developed and later refined into the Project: Development of Caribbean Network of Fisher Folk Organizations, September 2006 – July 2008.

The Project was aimed at delivering the following outputs:

- ✓ Creation of NFOs and CARNUFO facilitated.
- ✓ Management, communication and advocacy capacities of NFOs and CARNUFO strengthened.
- ✓ Fisher folk and other interested parties better provided with relevant information on regional fisheries issues.

Under this Project, the CTA/CRFM Training of Trainers Workshop for Fisheries Extension Officers to Enhance their Skills to Provide Better Information, Advisory and

Training Services to Primary and National Fisherfolk Organizations, was conducted in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, from December 4 to 14, 2006.

The National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization in St. Kitts and Nevis is part of the project aimed at promoting the establishment of National Fisherfolk Organizations (NFOs) in the Group II countries.

2.0 Welcome and Opening Remarks

The consultation to launch a National Fisherfolk Organization in St. Kitts and Nevis was held at the conference room of the Sandy Point Fisheries Complex on St. Kitts, on the 12th July 2007. Thirteen participants, comprising the Senior Fisheries Officer; two fisheries extension officers, one serving fisher folk from Nevis and the other serving St. Kitts; and one representative from each of the four registered fishers cooperatives of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis attended the consultation. Other participants were three officers of the Cooperatives Division, including the Cooperatives Commissioner, and two representatives of the CRFM.

The welcome and opening remarks for the consultation were done by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing, Agriculture, Fisheries and Cooperatives, Dr. Hermia Morton-Anthony. Mr. Terrence Phillips gave a brief overview of the CTA/CRFM Project and the purpose of the consultation. The Minister for Housing, Agriculture, Fisheries and Cooperatives, Hon. Cedric Liburd, addressed the participants during which he pledged his support for the Project, and encouraged the fishermen to use the opportunity to get organized in order to play a greater role in the development of the fishing industry of St. Kitts and Nevis. He wished the participants well in their deliberations and urged them to cooperate towards forming an NFO in St. Kitts and Nevis.

Senior Fisheries Officer, Mr. Joseph Simmonds gave the vote of thanks, thanking all participants including the facilitators and resource persons who were present. He also thanked the Minister for Agriculture and the Permanent Secretary, for making the time to address the fishermen of St. Kitts and Nevis who were participating in the national Consultation.

3.0 Introduction of Participants

Participants and resource persons from the Cooperative and Fisheries Departments introduced themselves, indicating the role of the organizations that they represented in relation to the Consultations. The CRFM representative, Mr. Terrence Phillips and the facilitator of the consultation, Mr. Harold Guiste, also introduced themselves. See the List of Participants set out in **Appendix 1**

The agenda for the consultation was adopted without any amendments. See Agenda given at **Appendix 2**.

4.0 Overview of CTA/CRFM Project: Development of Caribbean Network of Fisher folk Organizations.

Mr. Terrence Phillips, Programme Manager, Fisheries Management and Development, CRFM Secretariat, gave an overview of the CTA/CRFM Project: Development of Caribbean Network of Fisher Folk Organizations which helped to introduce the Project to the participants and provided information on the objective of the Consultation. He also commented on the need for making fishers and fisher folk groups more aware of their role in the participatory approach to fisheries management and to get them involved in the decision making process. In addition, he emphasized the need for networking of fisher folk organizations at the national and regional levels, bearing in mind the shared nature of the fisheries resources and the need for collaboration in the management of said resources.

4.1 Discussion

Due to issues of IUU fishing by foreign fishers, participants enquired about the involvement of non-CARICOM countries in the management of shared resources. They were informed of the negotiations taking place on the Common Fisheries Policy and Regime for CARICOM Member States and the role that such collaboration could play in dealing with non-CARICOM countries concerning IUU fishing and the management of shared resources. Also, they were advised that functioning NFOs and a RFO could become effective advocates for fisher folk in addressing such matters at the national and regional levels. Some participants indicated that the network of fisherfolk organizations could be very useful in addressing fishing access issues under the CFP&R.

5.0 Fisherfolk Organizations in the Caribbean: Networking for Success

This topic was presented by the Facilitator, Mr. Harold Guiste, who addressed such areas as the definition of a network; the use and functions of networks, and indicated how primary fisherfolk organizations on St. Kitts and Nevis could use such an approach to address common problems. Networking at the regional level was also emphasized, with the benefits of such networking being explained. Against this background, he introduced the rationale for a Caribbean Regional Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CARNUFO), with the objective of the project being highlighted as it related to using an organized network to help fisherfolk realize increased earnings, enhanced social status and conservation of the fishery resources.

Information on the benefits of forming a National Fisherfolk Organization (NFO) was presented to participants, with it being explained that the formation or strengthening of NFOs and related PFOs in the region was a requirement for the formation of CARNUFO.

5.1 Discussion

The participants supported the idea of the formation of an NFO in St. Kitts and Nevis. However, the representatives from the island of Nevis indicated that the necessary steps should be taken to ensure that such a group was inclusive of the PFOs on both islands, noting that from past experiences this tended not to be so. The Senior Fisheries Officer explained that the NFO would be an arrangement between fisherfolk and the primary groups and should be developed as a means of giving fishers a voice at the highest levels in St. Kitts and Nevis.

The representatives of the four cooperatives present at the Consultation undertook to inform their members about the formation of an NFO and provide feedback.

6.0 Launching of a National Fisher folk Organization (NFO); Rationale, Legal and Institutional Requirements, Objectives, Role and Functions, Membership, Decision –Making

This topic was presented by Mr. Antonia Wilson, Registrar of Co-operatives from the Cooperative Department of St. Kitts and Nevis. He looked at the options of forming a cooperative or association umbrella body, noting that an association would be a fairly loose and informal organization whereas the cooperative would have to be registered and regulated in keeping with the cooperative laws, which required greater accountability. He also set out the steps, including the need for supporting resolutions from the PFOs, drafting of by-laws and business plan that would lead to the registration and operations of a cooperative. In addition, he pointed out that a strong NFO would require strong PFOs and that all should be done to enhance the capacity and institutional strength of the existing PFOs of the twin island Federation. He explained that the existing legal framework was sufficient to allow the NFO to become a legal entity once it was formed.

6.1 Discussion

The fishers of Nevis expressed some concern about the formation of one NFO for both islands, but following on some discussion on this matter, it was agreed that there was strength and greater opportunity in forming one NFO. As, such a national group would be in a position to represent its members at all levels on both islands of the Federation. Unity and solidarity was recognized as being critical to the success of the NFO.

7.0 *Formation, Objectives, Structure, Role Functions and Operation of a National Fisher folk Organization: The Belize Experience.*

During the presentation on this topic, Mrs. Barbara Bradley, representative of the Belize Fishermen Cooperation Association (BFCA), described the role and functions of the BFCA and explained that it was the Belize National Fisherfolk Organization, with the National Fishermen Producers Co-operative Society Limited, Caribena and Placencia Fishers Co-operatives constituting its membership. She pointed out that the BFCA performed an advocacy role and held a position on the Fisheries Advisory Board. It was also explained that this NFO provided training and education to all its members, with the PFOs providing annual financial contributions to this secondary organization to assist with its operations.

She gave an overview of the operations of the National Fishermen Producers Co-operative Society Limited, which is a member of the BFCA, explaining that the Cooperative, which employed sixty persons, was involved in the processing and marketing of conch and lobsters for its members. It provided interest free loans and burial and medical benefits to its members.

The presentation was accompanied by a slide show of the conch and lobster processing operations, indicating the high level of organization and professionalism exercised in product preparation and processing. A copy of the report of the 41st Annual General Meeting of the National Fishermen Producers Co-operative Society Limited was made available to the participants at the Consultation.

7.1 Discussion

Participants welcomed the presentation and showed great interest in the operations of the National Fishermen Producers Co-operative Society Limited, including the many benefits being provided to its members. They indicated that they were impressed with the income generating capacity of the Society.

In response to a query about the management structure of the Belize NFO, they were informed that every year a seven person Management Committee, made up of representatives elected by PFOs at their annual general meetings, would be appointed to look after the affairs of the Cooperative, with an Executive Manager being assigned to manage the daily operations of the society.

The participants pointed out that they were encouraged and impressed by the successes of the FFOs of Belize and realized that it was time for them to get organized and to work towards forming an NFO in St. Kitts and Nevis.

8.0 Way Forward

Under this Agenda Item, the fisherfolk leaders and others present recognized the need for the formation of an NFO in St. Kitts and Nevis and agreed to form one. It was recommended that training, advocacy and importation of fishing requisites should be among the activities planned for the first phase of its operations. They also expressed their support for the formation of CARNUFO and indicated that they would seek membership when the NFO was formed.

St. Kitts and Nevis has five (5) fishermen's cooperatives with one of these being on Nevis. Representatives from three of the cooperatives were present at the consultation. The fishers decided among themselves to form a Steering Committee to take the process forward to the realization of the NFO. The Committee was formed by fishers volunteering to serve, with the Fisheries and Cooperatives providing support/technical assistance. The members of the Steering Committee are given below:

Wilson Hobson	-Nevis Fishermen's Cooperative Society
Lee Graham	-Basseterre Fishermen's Association
Theophilus Taylor	-Sandy Point Fishermen's Cooperative
Ralph Wilkins	-Fisheries Division
Clyde Thompson	-Cooperative Department
Sean Isles	-Fisheries Officer Nevis.

Mr. Wilson Hobson was nominated to chair the Committee.

The group decided that their first step towards forming the NFO would be to go as a team to promote and hold discussions with the membership of the respective PFOs to obtain their support and the necessary resolutions. It was agreed that this activity should be completed by the end of August 2007. The second step would be to work with the Cooperatives Department to draft the by-laws for the NFO, which would include all the PFOs that had passed the necessary resolutions, and the outline of a business plan. The participants decided that they wanted to have all legal arrangements and procedures completed so that they could launch the NFO on World Food Day, October 16th 2007.

At the end of the consultation the Senior Fisheries Officer made some closing remarks. He pointed out that the newly formed Committee should make use of the Ministry of Agriculture's information programme during their promotion exercise. He also commented that the Consultation was very fruitful and productive and that he was very hopeful for the realization of a National Fisherfolk Organization for St. Kitts and Nevis.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. Terrence Phillips	Programme Manager, Fisheries Management and Development	CRFM Secretariat,
2. Barbara Bradley	Executive Secretary	BFCA Belize
3. Edred Ward	Co-operatives Officer	Cooperative Department – Nevis
4. Ales Percival	Fisheries Officer	Department of Fisheries - Nevis
5. Theophilus Taylor	President	Sandy Point Fishermen’s Co-operative
6. Audra Barrett	Assistant Fisheries Officer	Department of Fisheries - Nevis
7. Wilson Hobson	President	Nevis Fishermen’s Cooperative
8. Lee Graham	President	Basseterre Fishermen’s Association
9. Clyde Thompson	Co-operatives Officer	Department of cooperatives – St. Kitts
10. Ralph Wilkins	Fisheries Officer	Department of Fisheries – St. Kitts
11. Joseph Simmonds	Senior Fisheries Officer	Department of Fisheries – St. Kitts
12. Antonio Wilson	Registrar of Co-operatives	Department of Cooperatives _ St. Kitts
13. Sean Isles	Fisheries Officer	Fisheries Department - Nevis

Appendix 2.

National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organisation (NFO) in St. Kitts and Nevis

Agenda

08:30 - 08:35	Opening Remarks – Permanent Secretary
08:35 – 08:45	Brief Remarks - Mr. Terrence Phillips
08:45 - 08:55	Feature Address – Minister of Agriculture
08:55 – 09:00	Vote of thanks -- Senior Fisheries Officer,
09:00 – 10:05	Introduction of participants
10:05 – 10:20	Presentation – Overview of CTA/CRFM Project: <i>Development of Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations</i> – CRFM Secretariat
10:20 – 10:30	Discussion
10:30 - 11:00	Presentation – Fisherfolk Organisations in the Caribbean: <i>Networking for Success</i> - CRFM Secretariat/Facilitator.
11:00 – 11:15	Discussion
11:15– 11:45	Presentation – <i>Launching of a National Fisherfolk Organization (NFO): Rationale, Legal and Institutional Requirements, Objectives, Role and Functions, Membership, Decision-Making</i> –Department of Fisheries/Cooperatives Department.
11:45 – 12:00	Discussion
12:00 – 12:15	Presentation – <i>Formation, Objectives, Structure, Roles, Functions and Operations of a National Fisherfolk Organization: The Belize Experience</i> - Belize Fishermen Cooperation Association (BFCA) representative.
12:15 – 12:30	Discussion
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch
1:30 – 2:30	Discussions on the Formation of a NFO in [Country] – Objectives, Role and Functions, etc.
2:30 – 3:00	Way Forward