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**REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION TO
LAUNCH A NATIONAL FISHERFOLK ORGANIZATION
IN GUYANA**

**CRFM Secretariat, Belize
2007**

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**Report of the National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk
Organization in Guyana**

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Report of the National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization
in Guyana

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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 fisherfolk 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 Fisherfolk 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.
- Fisherfolk 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 Guyana was part of the project aimed at promoting the establishment of National Fisherfolk Organisations (NFOs) in the Group II countries.

2.0 Welcome and Opening Ceremony

The National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization in Guyana was held at the Chedi Jagan Research Center in Georgetown on 27th July 2007.

The Opening Ceremony was covered by seven media houses, including the Guyana Information Agency, and it was chaired by the Principal Fisheries Officer, Dawn Maison. Mr. Terrence Phillips, Programme Manager, CRFM Secretariat, gave the opening remarks, which included a brief overview of the CTA/CRFM Project: Development of Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations and its relevance to the participatory fisheries management process.

The Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Robert Persaud delivered the feature address. He commended the fisherfolk present for their attendance and expressed his support for the project to launch a national fisher folk organization in Guyana. He saw it as an opportunity for the fisher folk to have a more structured engagement with Government in the area of fisheries development and management in Guyana.

He encouraged participants to get involved and to support government efforts aimed at helping fishers, noting that the Ministry was engaged in providing concessions on gear and equipment, improvements in infrastructure, as well as addressing conflicts involving the near shore operators of trawlers and the artisanal operations. He also spoke about the efforts being taken to combat piracy being perpetrated against local fishermen.

The Minister indicated that an NFO would not belong to the Government, but to the fisherfolk of Guyana and he was therefore looking to see greater interest by fishers to get organized to do what government could not accomplish by itself alone. He committed himself to supporting FFO development in the country and recognized the importance of fishers coming together to form a strong NFO. He then wished the participants success in their deliberations.

3.0 Introduction of Participants

All participants at the consultation introduced themselves and indicated the organizations that they represented and their designations. Four fishermen's co-operatives societies and two fisherman's associations were represented. Others included personnel of the Co-operatives and Fisheries Departments and the team from the CRFM Secretariat. See list of participants as set in Appendix 1, and see Appendix 2 for Agenda of consultation.

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

Mr. Terrence Phillips, Programme Manager, CRFM Secretariat, gave an overview of the CTA/CRFM Project: *Development of Caribbean Network of Fisher folk Organizations*, including the objective for the component of the Project that was aimed at promoting the formation of NFOs in Groups 2 Countries: The Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and Grenadines.

He commented on the need to make fishers and fisherfolk organizations more aware of their role in the participatory approach to fisheries management and get them more involved in the decision making process. He indicated that the protection of their economic interest should serve as one of the motivating factors for participants to become more committed to the formation of an NFO. In addition, he indicated that fisherfolk organizations should strive to become independent and to be able to sustain themselves over time.

4.1 Discussion

Participants welcomed the idea on the formation of an NFO in Guyana. They opined that the information in the Briefing Note: *Fisher folk Organization in the Caribbean: Networking for Success* could be the catalyst for the resuscitation of dormant societies which would be of benefit to the younger fishers. There were some discussions on sharing of information on relevant fisheries and organizational matters with primary groups, exchange programmes for fisherfolk and the need for fisherfolk and their organizations to capitalize on the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) in the marketing of fish and fish products.

5.0 Fisherfolk Organization in the Caribbean: *Networking for Success*

This presentation was made by the Facilitator, Mr. Harold Guiste. He indicated that the main objective of the presentation was to provide information to the participants on the benefits of forming umbrella organizations, challenges involved, and the importance and benefits of networking among individuals, groups and organizations.

A brief history of the reasons for the formation of FFOs in the Caribbean was presented, with the causes for successes and failures being identified. The different types of fisherfolk organizations - primary, secondary, apex, and regional - were defined, and the rationale for the formation of NFOs given. The concept of the formation of CARNUFO and the likely benefits as it related to using an organized network to help fisherfolk realize increased earnings, enhance social status and conserve the fishery resources were pointed out.

Some critical requirements for ensuring the viability and success of a network in terms of purpose and function were explained to the fishers. Types of networks that could possibly be used were provided, along with a schematic diagram of how the NFOs would be positioned in such networking arrangements.

5.1 Discussion

It was suggested that prior to the formation of any NFO that the members from all fishermen's cooperative societies would need to be consulted, with it being noted that there were thirteen (13) registered fishermen's cooperative societies in Guyana, but not all were active. Participants observed that the Guyana Private Owners Trawlers Association was an active non-registered association.

In relation to queries about duty free concessions being provided by Government, participants were informed that all fishers were entitled to duty free concessions on such things as engines, fishing gear, spares, etc. It was suggested that one of the functions of an NFO would be to help disseminate such information to all concerned.

The Chief Cooperative Officer, Mr. Clyde Nurse, in response to a query as to whether NFOs could take the form of a cooperative or association, informed the Consultation that the Cooperatives Department administered both the act governing cooperatives and the one regulating associations, so in either case the body would come under their supervision.

In terms of financing of the NFO, it was indicated that the member organizations would have to contribute to the budget based on an agreed formula and that the NFO could also conduct business activities in keeping with its agreed mandate.

Regarding their concerns about piracy and the licensing arrangements to fish in Suriname, participants recognized that an NFO could play a significant role in advocating their concerns on these matters at all levels.

One member from the Fisheries Advisory Committee (FAC) informed the participants that as of March 2007 the Government of Guyana had resuscitated the Committee with representation being drawn from various stakeholders in the fisheries and related sectors. He indicated that the NFO could seek representation on such a body.

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 the Chief Co-operative Officer, Mr. Clyde Nurse. He informed the meeting that the Co-operative Department of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security was the authority tasked with the responsibility of regulating and monitoring all co-operative societies in Guyana. He then gave a short history of the Department's role and functions in keeping with the **Cooperative Societies Ordinance**, Chapter 326 of 1948, and subsequent amendments.

He further explained that co-operatives were an activity of the people. That it was a self-generated, voluntary and self-sufficient activity, democratically controlled by its members. However, for the protection of members' interests the government was tasked with maintaining order and effectiveness in the movement.

He spoke about the establishment of cooperatives, their by-laws, roles and functions, and indicated that in terms of minimum membership requirements for the formation of a primary cooperative society, seven persons who reside in the area of operation or who have any other common bond, such as residing in common locality, or in occupation of land within area of operation or similar employer or religious grouping, can join in application for registration of a society.

6.1 Discussion

In response to a query, it was pointed out that a minimum of seven primary societies could come together to form a federation. In the case of Guyana this could constitute the NFO.

7.0 Formation, Objectives, Structure, Role Functions and Operation of a National Fisherfolk Organization: The Belize Experience

This presentation was delivered by Mrs. Barbara Bradley, Belize Fishermen Cooperation Association (BFCA) representative, who gave a very comprehensive account of the structure and functions of the BFCA. She explained that the NFO engaged in training and education and performed an advocacy role for its members.

Mrs. Bradley, the Executive Secretary of the Belize National Fishermen's Cooperative Society Limited (a PFO), also explained that this Cooperative performed processing and marketing services for its members and at least two other PFOs. They were responsible for sales and marketing of conch and lobster to the United States of America. She

presented some aspects of the 41st Annual General Report of the Cooperative Society and highlighted its financial standing.

A slide presentation on the processing of lobster was shown giving an idea of the magnitude of the operations of the Cooperative and the benefits which members enjoyed.

7.1 Discussion

There was some discussion on the importance of quality control and plant certification in the export of lobster and conch by the Fishers' Cooperatives of Belize. Also, participants noted that due to the nature of their needs and development, the fishers cooperatives in Belize were production and market oriented while those in Guyana were more into importation of fishing requisites and the provision of ice, docking facilities, etc. for their members.

It was recommended that fisherfolk representatives should visit Belize under an exchange programme to obtain a better appreciation for the processing and marketing operations of the fishers' cooperatives. It was indicated that such programmes could be arranged by the CRFM Secretariat and the NFO.

8.0 Way Forward

For the fisherfolk of Guyana the task before them was to determine the type of NFO to form, with it being recognized that it should be structured to be inclusive of all fisherfolk organizations, whether they agreed to be involved from the inception or later. A Steering Committee was formed of all members PFOs present, with a mandate to hold discussions, as a team, with all the existing PFOs to obtain the necessary resolutions.

Guyana has thirteen fishermen's cooperatives, of which seven or eight are active; and three fishermen's friendly societies in Region #2 namely: Lima\Sparta, Cullen and Unu Creek, and these could be consulted in the formation of an NFO.

The Steering Committee members are as follows:

1. Mr. Mohamed Khan - Greater Georgetown Fishermen's Coop Society-
 2. Mr. P. Singh - Parika Fishport Complex-
 3. Mr. B. Samwaru - Rosignol Fishman Coop Society-
 4. Mr. S.P. Samaroo - Albion Fisherman Coop –
 5. Mr. Winston Henry - Lima\ Sparta Fisherman Friendly Society –
 6. Member of staff - Ministry of Labour and Cooperatives –
 7. Ms. Ingrid Peters - Fisheries Department-
- (See appendix 1 for designations of Committee members)

The Chief Co-operatives Officer agreed to provide by August 10, 2007, information to the Committee regarding the regulations for the formation of a federation or association of fisherfolk Organizations and model by-laws or constitution for cooperative societies and associations, respectively, to assist in the process. He also agreed to research whether primary fishermen's associations and primary fishermen's co-operative societies could be brought together under one NFO.

It was agreed that the Committee would meet at the office of the Fisheries Department to work out the details of the process to hold consultations with the PFOs and obtain the necessary resolutions to form the NFO as well as the development of the by-laws or constitution, etc. The Fisheries Department indicated that they would assist with the transportation arrangements. The Committee set a deadline to launch the NFO by 16th October 2007, World Food Day.

The Consultation ended with members of the Committee exchanging contact information, and the Principle Fisheries Officer thanking everyone present for their active participation.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

List of participants for the National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization (NFO) in GUYANA

No	NAME	ORGANIZATION	DESIGNATION	TELEPHONE #
1	Mohamed Khan	Greater Georgetown Fisherman Co-op Society Ltd	Secretary / Manager	592 -2261421
2	Heralall Doobay	Greater Georgetown Fisherman Co-op Society	Sales Clerk	592-2261421
3	Winston Harry	Lima/Sparta Fisherman Association	Vice Chairman	
4	Deonarine Sewnarine	Lima / Sparta Fisherman Association	Chairman	592-6177646
5	Phileman Singh	Parika Fishport Complex	Secretary	
6	B. Samwaru	Rosignol Fishermen Co-op Society	Chairman	592-6264679
7	Deomattie Bachu	Rosignol Fishermen Co-op Society	Secretary	
8	Irvin Mc Lennan	MOA, Fisheries Department	Fisheries Assistant 11	592-771
9	S. Samaroo	Albion Fishermen Co-op	Chairman	592-3220618
10	Alvin Carpen	Albion Fishermen Coop	Member	
11	Roopnarine Ramnarine	Lima/ Sparta Fisherman Co-op Society	Secretary	592-7714789
12	Clyde Nurse	Ministry of Labour and Co-operatives	Chief Co-op Officer	
13	Ingrid Peters	MOA, Fisheries Department	Fisheries Officer	592-2259551 /2264398
14	Dawn Maison	MOA, Fisheries Department	Principal Fisheries Officer	592-2259551 /2264398
15				
16				

Appendix 2.

National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization (NFO) in Guyana

Agenda

Opening Ceremony

- 08:30 - 08:35 Welcome and Introduction, Ms Dawn Madison, PFO, Fisheries Department
- 08:35 – 08:45 Brief Remarks - Mr. Terrence Phillips, CRFM
- 08:45 - 08:55 Feature Address – Hon. Cedric Labored, Minister HAF&C
- 08:55 – 09:00 Vote of thanks -- Mr. Joseph Simmonds, Senior Fisheries Officer,

Working Session

- 09:00 – 09:15 Introduction of participants
- 09:15 – 10:00 Presentation – **Overview of CTA/CRFM Project: *Development of Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations*** – CRFM Secretariat
- 10:00 – 10:30 Discussion
- 10:30 - 11:00 Presentation – **Fisherfolk Organizations in the Caribbean: *Networking for Success*** - CRFM Secretariat/Facilitator.
- 11:00 – 11:15 Discussion
- 11:15– 11:45 Presentation – ***Launching of a National Fisherfolk Organization (NFO): Rationale, Legal and Institutional Requirements, Objectives, Role and Functions, Membership, Decision-Making*** – 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