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**REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION TO  
LAUNCH A NATIONAL FISHERFOLK ORGANIZATION  
IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

**CRFM Secretariat, Belize  
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# **CRFM Technical & Advisory Document – Number 2007/ 10**

## **Report of the National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization in St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

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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 fisherfolk 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 fisherfolk 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 Fisherfolk 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 Fisher Folk 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. Vincent and the Grenadines was part of the project aimed at promoting the establishment of National Fisherfolk Organizations (NFOs) in the Group II countries.

## **2.0 Welcome and Opening Ceremony**

The National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization in St. Vincent and the Grenadines was held at the conference room of the Kingstown Fisheries Complex on the 30th of July 2007. The proceedings of the Opening Ceremony were covered by two media houses. 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 management of the region's shared fisheries resources.

The feature address was delivered by the Chief Fisheries Officer, Mr. Raymond Ryan, who welcomed the participants to the National Consultation and indicated that many Caribbean countries were highly dependent upon marine resources for economic and social development and that fisheries was a source of livelihood and sustenance for the people of the region, contributing towards food security, poverty alleviation, employment, foreign exchange earnings, development and stability of rural and coastal communities, and culture, recreation and tourism. He further noted that renewable fisheries resources were not infinite and needed to be properly managed. Failure of the present process of fisheries governance to achieve responsible and effective management would lead to certain collapse of the fisheries resources, unless appropriate measures were implemented to reverse this trend.

He pointed out that the Fisheries Division would continue to implement measures to enhance the capacity of fisherfolk to participate in the process of fisheries management through the strengthening and establishment of fisherfolk groups. The potential benefits that could be derived from strong fisherfolk organizations included fishers' pensions, savings, insurance for vessels and life, scholarships, rebates on sales and training.

He indicated that this collaborative effort between the Fisheries Division and the CRFM Secretariat was aimed at furthering the involvement of fishers in the fisheries management process at the local, national and regional levels through the formation of a National Fisherfolk Organization in SVG.

Having set the tone for the Consultation, the CFO declared the meeting open.

### **3.0 Introduction of Participants**

All representatives of primary fisher folk organizations present introduced themselves and indicated the organization that they represented. The resource persons, including Fisheries and Cooperative officers and the CRFM Secretariat Team, and a group of students on summer assignments at the Fisheries Division also introduced themselves. See list of participants set at Appendix 1 and agenda for consultation at Appendix 2.

### **4.0 Overview of CTA/CRFM Project: Development of Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations**

Mr. Terrence Phillips, Programme Manager, CRFM Secretariat, gave an overview of the CTA/CRFM Project: *Development of Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk 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.

### **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, enhanced social status and conservation of 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**

The issue of the state of preparedness of the PFOs of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the formation of an NFO was of concern to participants. The fishers explained that the PFOs, most of which were primary fishermen's co-operatives, were faced with many challenges and believed that there was a lot to be done in terms of getting all primary organizations fully functional before any NFO could be formed. The view was expressed that the PFOs were at different levels of development and readiness. Others indicated that all PFOs did not necessarily have to be fully functional before the NFO could be formed, but a start could be made with those who were prepared to form the organization. It was noted that once an NFO was established, one of its main functions would be to help weak PFOs to build their capacity and institutional capabilities.

One participant indicated that he had initiated the process for getting PFOs together and making them aware of the need for an NFO after participating in the meeting of the Pro Tem Working Group on Institutional Strengthening of Caribbean Fisherfolk Organizations in Guyana in June 2005. However, some internal difficulties with the Calliaqua and Barrouallie Fisheries Co-operatives had slowed down the process. He saw the Consultation as a necessary step towards resuming the discussions to form an NFO in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and was confident that it could be formed without much difficulty, with a start being made with those present at the Consultation.

A word of caution was given in terms of guiding the process towards forming an NFO, with the Chief Fisheries Officer advising that some initial concepts and a framework structure should be developed and taken to the membership of the various PFOs for further discussion and refinement.

The participants agreed that the time frame for formation of the NFO depended on the interest of the fisherfolk themselves and their capacity to mobilize resources to reach other PFOs in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Participants indicated that they saw the wisdom in forming an NFO and the benefits that could result from doing so. However, they noted that the organization would have to be empowered and have legitimacy.

Training and education at all levels was identified as being critical to the success of the NFO as well as that of the wider CARNUFO.



## **6.0 Launching of a National Fisherfolk Organization (NFO); Rationale, Legal and Institutional Requirements, Objectives, Role and Functions, Membership, Decision –Making.**

This presentation was given by Mr. Cecil Jackson, Registrar of Co-operatives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. He explained the role and function of the Cooperative Department as being regulatory and for the provision of technical assistance. He pointed out that the Cooperative Department recognized three functional fishermen's cooperatives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, but indicated that in most cases management skills were generally weak and that training would have to be a major component of the project. He mentioned that commitment of fishers was critical to the formation and sustainability of an NFO.

The Registrar of Co-operatives highlighted the following benefits to forming an NFO:

- i. Greater visibility and recognition for the fisher folk of SVG.
- ii. Providing an opportunity to showcase economic and social importance of fisheries in SVG.
- iii. Providing an opportunity for deepening cooperation and partnerships.
- iv. Advocacy at all levels.
- v. Providing an opportunity for collective planning.
- vi. Providing an opportunity for institutional strengthening to meet the needs of members.

In addition to the above, the registrar indicated that an NFO should adopt a structure of wide cooperation to include fisherfolk other than fishermen only. It should include fish vendors, boat builders and other persons as per the definition in the Briefing Note. It was noted that the NFO could start with the PFOs, but there would be opportunities for other stakeholder groups to become involved.

He also indicated that financing was necessary for the sustainability of the NFO, for day to day operations and to facilitate training. Start up funds would be required for administrative work, rental of office space, cost of telephone, electricity, transportation and the development of a business plan etc. at least for the first three months of operations.

He pointed out that the minimum requirement for the formation of an NFO under the Co-operative Societies Act No. 24 of 1999 was three members. Once the NFO was ready to be registered, the group would have to submit its by-laws and a business plan to the Co-operative Department as a pre - registration requirement. Upon approval of these, the NFO would be registered.

## **6.1 Discussion**

Participants were very familiar with the registration procedure since the PFOs represented were all co-operatives. However, they wanted to know if the Cooperative Department could assist with the development of the business plan. It was indicated that the Cooperative Department could not perform that function since they were the ones to approve or disapprove of it and that would constitute conflict of interest. However, they could recommend someone to assist in the preparation of the business plan, but that would incur a cost to the group.

## **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's Cooperative 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 2006 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**

Participants were very impressed with the presentation and wanted to know to what extent fishermen patronized the Belize National Fishermen's Cooperative Society Limited. It was pointed out that the organization was fully patronized by its members since it was in their best economic interest to do so. Members received patronage refund plus other benefits for selling their product to the Cooperative rather than selling it elsewhere.

Participants also wanted to know if the BFCA was involved with management of the lobster and conch fisheries. Ms. Bradley indicated that this regulatory function was done by the Fisheries Department and members complied with management measures as far as possible since the cooperative would not accept illegal size lobster and those caught in the closed season.

## 8.0 WAY FORWARD

Mindful of the challenges that would be brought about with the implementation of the CSME and conscious of the changing business environment with matters involving the marine space, such as tourism interests, coastal developments etc., participants were convinced that the formation of an NFO for SVG was absolutely necessary to represent their interests at the national and regional levels.

Presently there are four (4) fishermen's cooperatives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, of which two, namely the Goodwill Fishermen's Cooperative Society and Calliaqua Fisherfolk Cooperative, were represented at the consultation. The participants agreed to the formation of an NFO and indicated that they would like the NFO to function in the following areas: advocacy, education and training, national representation, mobilizing of resources and bulk purchase of fishing gear and equipment.

In order to move the process towards forming an NFO, a Steering Committee was formed with the following members:

Eocen Victory  
Palma Gibson  
Calvin Lampkin  
Cooperative representative  
Fisheries representative  
Representative of the Barrouallie Fisheries Cooperative  
(see appendix 1 for designation of committee members)

Participants were concerned that there were primary fisher folk groups that were not cooperatives and wanted them incorporated into the NFO, for it to be a truly national organization. The Cooperatives Officer, Mr. Patterson Homer, said that such groups could become involved through the structuring of the by-laws to ensure their participation.

The mandate given to the Steering Committee was as follows:

1. to meet, as soon as possible, to develop a strategy and plan of action to move the process towards the formation of an NFO
2. to identify the registered and non-registered fisherfolk groups and hold discussions, as a team, with them
3. obtain feedback and possible resolutions from the PFOs regarding the formation of an NFO

The Fisheries Department offered to help with funding for travel and other logistical arrangements necessary for the Committee to conduct its work. The Committee in setting a time frame for its activities indicated that discussions with all groups would have been completed by the end of September 2007 and that the business plan and registration requirement would be completed by mid-December 2007.

All participants were in favour of becoming part of CARNUFO.

The Consultation ended with the CFO expressing thanks to the fisherfolk, individuals, students and all present for their active participation and for having moved closer towards forming an NFO for SVG.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### List of Participants of the National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Palma Gibson	Calliquia Fisherfolk Co-operative	President
Calvin Lampkin	Goodwill Fishing Co-operative	President
Eocen Victory	Goodwill Fishing Co-operative	Member
Leonard Charles	Goodwill Fishing Co-operative	
Raymond Ryan	Fisheries Division	Chief Fisheries Officer
Loranzo George	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Bernard Soleyn	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Hyrone Johnson	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Rowie Kirby Straker	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Sheena Gonzales	Fisheries Division	Data Manager
Ernie Bracken	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Phyasaun Wilkes	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Patterson Homer	Co-operative Department	Co-op Officer
Cecil Jackson	Co-operative Department	Registrar
Jerome De Shong	National Fisheries Marketing Ltd.	Manager
Shameca Latham	SVG Community College	Student
Daria Ollivierre	SVG Community College	Student
Sophia Jardine	SVG Community College	Student
Osie Martin	SVG Community College	Student
Terreance Phillip	CRFM Secretariat	Programme Manager
Barbra Bradley	BFCA	Resource Person
Harold Guiste	Dominica Fisheries Division	Facilitator

## Appendix 2

### National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organisation (NFO) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

#### Agenda

##### Opening Ceremony

- 09:00 - 09:25            Opening Remarks – Chairman Mr. Raymond Ryan, Chief Fisheries Officer
- 09:25 –            09:40            Brief Remarks - Mr. Terrence Phillips, CRFM
- 09:40 – 10:05            Break

##### Working Session

- 10:05 – 10:20            Presentation – **Overview of CTA/CRFM Project: *Development of Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations*** – CRFM Secretariat
- 10:20 – 10:30            Presentation -**Brief history of the National Fishermen’s Association of Grenada** - President , Southern Fishermen’s Association
- 10:30 - 11:00            Presentation – **Fisherfolk Organisations 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 – ***Formation, Objectives, Structure, Roles, Functions and Operations of a National Fisherfolk Organization: The Belize Experience*** - 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 Grenada – Objectives, Role and Functions, etc.
2:30 – 3:00	Way Forward