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

**CRFM Secretariat, Belize
2007**

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

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in Grenada

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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 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 fisherfolk 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.
- 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 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 Grenada 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 Grenada was held at the conference room of the Melville Street Market Complex on the 25th of July 2007. The Government Information Service covered the proceedings of the Opening Ceremony. The opening remarks were delivered by the Chief Fisheries Officer, Justin Rennie. He welcomed the participants to the National Consultation to launch an NFO, which would form part of a regional network with similar bodies across the region. He indicated that the initiative to form an NFO had its genesis in the mid 1980s with the formation of the National Fishermen's Association (NFA) of Grenada, with this body now being dormant.

He indicated that there were five registered Fishermen's Co-operatives and three Fishermen's Associations in Grenada, with some being more active than others. He further explained that historically FFOs had contributed significantly to the social, economic and sustainable livelihoods of fishing communities in Grenada. However, there was a tendency for these organizations to be remembered more for their failures than for their successes. The participants were urged to use the lessons of the past to strengthen their resolve to succeed in the future, with the recognition that the need to get organized must come from the fisherfolk themselves.

He noted that with PFOs already existing in the country, the aim should be to establish an umbrella organization that could provide coordination and represent the interests of the fisherfolk at the national level.

He further indicated that one of the main reasons for getting organized at the national level could be to bring about improvement in the trade in fish and fish products. As, Grenada was involved in exporting fish to North America and Europe, the challenges of globalization and the establishment of major trading blocks across the globe made it incumbent on the fishers to get organized so that they would not be left behind in this changing global environment.

The participants were cautioned that the decision to determine the goals, objectives, structure, and functions of the type of NFO to be formed rested with the fisherfolk themselves. The CFO further pointed out that in the process of fisheries management it had become very challenging to reach fishing communities through several small groups. As such, there was a general recognition that the industry would better be served through an umbrella body through which information could be channeled and the groups networked for greater efficiency.

He noted that the attendance of the fishermen indicated their intentions and commitment to becoming organized. However, there were constraints and challenges to doing so, with some being inadequate material and financial resources, limited managerial and technical capacities and restrictions on time due to the nature of their operations. The role of the CRFM Secretariat

in coordinating and facilitating the Consultation as well as the contribution of CTA to the project were also recognized, and the participants were encouraged to participate and to get involved in the 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 cooperatives and three fishermen's associations were represented. The resource persons, including Fisheries and Cooperative officers, and CRFM Secretariat's Team also introduced themselves. A full list of participants is given at **Appendix 1** and the Agenda for the Consultation is given 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 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 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 fisher folk organizations should strive to become independent and to be able to sustain themselves over time.

He encouraged the fisheries department to share copies of the document entitled "Fisherfolk organizations in the Caribbean: briefing note on networking for success", with the participants so that they could better appreciate the rationale relating to the formation of the NFO and CARNUFO.

5.0 A Brief history of the National Fishermen's Association (NFA) of Grenada.

Mr. James Nicholas, former president of the now dormant National Fishermen's Association, gave a brief history of the NFO which was registered in Grenada in 1993. He indicated that it was called the National Fishermen's Association (NFA) of Grenada, with the membership consisting of primary fishermen's cooperatives and fishermen's associations. The NFA had a constitution and had been registered.

He noted that the Fisheries Division and the Minister of Agriculture at the time were very supportive, with the NFA being given office space at the Fisheries Centre in Guave. The NFA had representation on the Fisheries Advisory Council and provided training and education to its members. The members paid monthly subscriptions to the Association, with two representatives from each PFO forming the executive. General decisions were made by the executive, but more important decisions of national interest required a resolution by the membership.

Mr. Nicholas claimed that the Association failed due to a lack of recognition after the government changed, noting that the kind of support that was given by the previous regime was not forthcoming and the Association was by-passed when major decisions concerning fisheries in Grenada were made. The NFA had lost its status. He indicated that the soon to be formed NFO should learn from the past errors of the NFA and consider the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between government and the NFO to ensure recognition. He also pointed out that regional governments should commit themselves to recognizing and working with the new NFOs being formed in the region.

5.1 Discussion

Participants recognized that the NFO as the body representing fisherfolk organizations at the national level would have to be careful in the way it carried out its functions, so as not to appear to be partial to any political party or government.

Poor communication was another reason identified for failure of the NFA as some present indicated that decisions and activities that took place at the executive level did not reach the general membership, so there was little support from them.

6.0 Fisherfolk Organizations 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 fisher folk 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 fisher folk 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.

6.1 Discussion

Participants sought information on the response to date on the formation of NFOs by the other Group 2 countries and were informed that they had all opted to do so, with steering committees being formed to further the process. They also recognized that the newly formed NFOs would require ongoing technical assistance and possibly some level of financial support and recommended that the Fisheries Division and CRFM Secretariat should seek to address these matters. The need for PFOs and NFOs to develop and implement business plans based on their needs were identified as being critical to the sustainability of these entities. The CRFM Secretariat's representative indicated that they would continue to provide technical assistance and training to PFOs, with the NFOs being identified as an important vehicle in this process.

Participants noted that proper communication was absolutely necessary for the effective functioning of an NFO, with a lack of networking at the national level being viewed as one of the reasons for the failure of the NFA. They also indicated the need for building capacity within individual PFOs to facilitate the transfer of information to their members.

Some fishers expressed the need for more social activities among members of the PFOs in order to develop comradeship and trust as well as to encourage informal discussions on topics of common interest.

7.0 **Launching of a National Fisher folk Organisation (NFO); Rationale, Legal and Institutional Requirements, Objectives, Role and Functions, Membership, Decision-making.**

This topic was presented by Mr. Chester Ferguson, Senior Co-operative Officer, of the Cooperatives Division of Grenada, who indicated that the function of the Division was to provide training, education and auditing services to registered groups under their jurisdiction, namely: credit unions; junior cooperatives, which included school saving unions of which there were eighty two in Grenada; and production oriented cooperatives which included fishers and farmer groups. The Division was also responsible for routine inspections and collection of statistical information to determine the financial viability of the organizations, in order to assess and help them improve and to give advice as required.

He indicated that the Cooperatives Division had found that the most successful cooperatives to date were the Soubise Fishermen's Cooperative and the Melville Street Fish Market Cooperative. He indicated that management of some of the other cooperatives on the Island was weak while others were dormant. The Soubise Fishermen's Cooperative operated a gas station, a bar, sold fishing requisites and had a consumer section.

He explained that in the formation of an NFO, the participants should seek to identify their needs and come together to address them by forming such a group and getting it registered. He then set

out the requirements to form and register an NFO, which included resolutions from the PFOs, development of a business plan, and development of by-laws or a constitution depending on whether it would be a cooperative or association.

7.1 Discussion

Participants indicated that the Co-operatives Division needed to increase its oversight of some Fishers' Co-operatives in order to improve on accountability and performance. It was noted that the Cooperatives Division was at a transitional stage as it was being restructured and so was not able to conduct all its activities in the required manner. However, it was pointed out by the Cooperative Officer that when the restructuring was completed, the organization would be in a better position to carry out its functions.

The Cooperative officer indicated that a minimum of two PFOs was required for the formation of a national or secondary body.

8.0 Formation, Objectives, Structure, Role Functions and Operation of a National Fisher folk Organisation: 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 Report of the 41st Annual General Meeting 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.

9.0 Way Forward

In Grenada there are five fishermen's cooperatives, three fishermen's association and the defunct NFA. The participants present who represented some of these cooperatives and associations, unanimously agreed that they were desirous of forming a National Fisherfolk Organization in Grenada. Some fisherfolk in the audience indicated that there were significant benefits to be gained by so doing based on the good experiences and lesson learnt from the NFA before it became defunct. They indicated that the areas in which they wanted the NFO to provide services

were fish marketing, education and training, advocacy, including representation on any fisheries advisory bodies to government and empowerment of fisherfolk.

Participants discussed the way forward in terms of whether to reactivate the old NFA since it was still a legally registered organization with an already written constitution, or to form a new organization that would incorporate co-operatives as well as associations. The Co-operative Officer confirmed that associations could be incorporated into a co-operative structure in the formation of an NFO, but they would be governed by the by-laws specific to the entity formed.

Some participants were concerned that the NFO would not be able to deliver benefits to its members if the organization was not strongly recognized by the government. They opined that it could become a major issue if the organization had to get involved in resource management at the community and national levels, which was normally under the jurisdiction of the state.

After much debate two options were presented to the participants:

1. to re-organize the NFA and include existing fisherfolk organizations.
2. form a new Cooperative, or Cooperative Association under the appropriate laws/act.

A committee was formed and given a mandate by the rest of the participants to do the following:

- i. Obtain the registration and other documentation for the dormant NFA;
- ii. Obtain model by-laws, etc. from the Cooperatives Division; and
- iii. Clearly identify the options and take them, as a team, for discussions with the respective PFOs and obtain the required approvals, ensuring that all fisherfolk groups in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique were involved in the consultations.

It was agreed that all discussions on the formation of the appropriate association would be completed by mid-September 2007, with target for the formation of the NFO being set for the end of October 2007.

Members of the Steering Committee are as follows:

Dexter Chance, - Committee Coordinator
Dexter Miller
Augustus Findlay
Richard Swan
Fisheries Division Representative
Cooperatives Department Representative
(See **Appendix 1** for designations of persons)

All participants agreed that they were in favour of forming or becoming part of the Regional Network of Fisherfolk Organization upon formation of the NFO.

The Chief Fisheries Officer in his closing remarks expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the meeting and pledged his support to the Steering Committee in the achievement of their objectives.

Appendices

Appendix 1

List of Participants of the National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization in Grenada.

Name	Organisation	Designation
James Nicholas	Southern Fishermen Association	President
Mayhee Rennie	Southern Fishermen Association	Member
Tamica Hall	Southern Fishermen Association	Secretary
Joseph Olive	Sauteurs Fishermen Cooperative	President
Richard Swan	Sauteurs Fishermen Cooperative	Member
Royan Isaac	Soubise Fishermen Cooperative	Secretary
Augustus Findlay	Soubise Fishermen Cooperative	Member
Radall Henry	Soubise Fishermen Cooperative	Member
Dexter Miller	Petite Martinique Co-operative	President
Alister Phillip	Grenada Co-operative Department	Registrar
Gemma Purcell-Phillip	Grenada Co-operative Department	Co-operatives officer
Florence Holmes	Grenada Co-operative Department	Co-operatives officer
Chester Ferguson	Grenada Co-operative Department	Senior Co-operative Officer
JudyAnn Horsford	Co-operative Department	Field Officer
Aldwyn Ferguson	St. John's Fishermen Association	President
Dexter Chance	St. John's Fishermen Association	Ass. President
Ron Simon	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Francis T. Calliste	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Beverly Mascall	Fisheries Division	Clerk
Moran Mitchell	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Junior McDonald	Fisheries Division/Carriacou	Fisheries Officer
Evlyn Alexander	Melville Street Fish Market	Manager
Rena Noel	Melville Street Fish Market	Clerk
Terrence Phillips	CRFM Secretariat	Facilitator
Barbara Bradley	BFCA	Resource Person
Harold Guiste	Dominica Fisheries Division	Facilitator

Appendix 2

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

Agenda

Opening Ceremony

- 09:00 - 09:25 Opening Remarks – Chairman Mr. Justin Rennie, 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 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 – ***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