



Fisher Folk Net

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A newsletter to share information among fisher folk organisations and people in fisheries on matters relating to sustainable fisheries management and other issues of interest to fisher folk organisations throughout the region

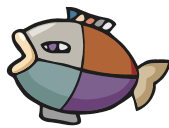
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Headquarters: Princess Margaret Drive, Belize City, Belize; Phone: (501) 223-4443 Fax: (501) 223-4446 Email: crfm@btl.net

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New Beginnings!

Since the start of 2009, the regional fisherfolk organisation - coordinating unit (now called the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations - Coordinating Unit, or CNFO-CU for short) has been making great strides in its attempts to get the voice of fishers heard on policy decisions that would affect the livelihoods of fishers and their families. It has also been working hard to formalise the structure and business plan for the CNFO as it moves to becoming a legally registered entity. Read on to find out more!



Ministers responsible for fisheries hear directly from CNFO-CU

The First CRFM Ministerial Council Meeting was held in St Vincent and the Grenadines on January 16, 2009. This meeting was comprised of CARICOM Ministers responsible

for fisheries or their designated representatives. This meeting was historic not only because it marked the first meeting of CARICOM Ministers devoted solely to regional fisheries matters, but for its recognition that fishers should have a say at the policy level.

During this meeting, the CNFO-CU (represented by its Coordinator Mr. Mitchell Lay and Deputy Coordinator Mr. Joslyn Lee Quay) submitted a 25-point statement to the ministers that made recommendations on stakeholder participation; the Common Fisheries Policy and Regime; fisheries management and development; and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.



Director of the CRFM, Mr. Hugh Saul (left) making a point to CNFO-CU Coordinator Mr. Mitchell Lay (centre) and Deputy Chair Mr. Joslyn Lee Quay ahead of the opening of the Ministerial Council Meeting.

CNFO-CU sits at CRFM Fisheries Forum for first time

As a result of the decision taken by the CRFM Executive Committee in December 2008, the CNFO-CU gained a seat at the 4th Special Meeting of the CRFM Fisheries Forum, which was held in the Commonwealth of Dominica on April 20, 2009. The fishers' organisation was represented at the table by CNFO-CU Coordinator Mr. Mitchell Lay, and new Public Relations Officer, Mr. Glaston White.



CNFO-CU Chair Mr. Mitchell Lay (second from left) and PRO Mr. Glaston White (seated behind) participating in the 4th Special Meeting of the CRFM Fisheries Forum in Dominica on April 20, 2009.

While at the meeting, Mr. Lay made a successful case for traditional knowledge to be given as much consideration as scientific information throughout the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). He also raised concerns over the lack of public awareness surrounding the CFP and a formal process for continuous consultation with fisherfolk representatives on the policy.

CNFO on path to becoming a legal entity

The Co-ordinating Unit of the CNFO has spent the past four months building the organisation in order to equip it to stand alone as a fully functioning legal entity. Coming out of the first regional workshop on Fisherfolk Policy Influence and Planning, held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines from January 13 to 15, 2009, the CNFO-CU identified a strategic direction for the body over the next year that will aid it in achieving a sustainable future for fisheries and fisherfolk across the region.



Fisherfolk leaders from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago attended the workshop.

Three planks were identified on which to take the organisation forward: a larger role in fisheries policy and management, moving towards Ecosystem Based Management; capacity building and knowledge sharing within and outside of fisherfolk organisations; and networking for information sharing, support, decision-making and regional participation.

This process was further advanced when the CNFO-CU met in the Commonwealth of Dominica between April 15 and 17, 2009, for the second Policy Influencing and Planning workshop. While there, the CNFO-CU forged ahead with outlining a budget and communications plan for the organisation, while also strategising on the interventions that would be made by the CNFO-CU on behalf of fisherfolk at the 4th Special Meeting of the Caribbean Fisheries Forum that took place on April 20.



CNFO-CU Chair Mr. Mitchell Lay (centre) and PRO Mr. Glaston White (right) sharing ideas with NAFCO-Op head Mr. Glenis Popo (left).

Grenada workshop - for fishers by fishers

In one of the rare times, a fisherfolk organization arranged a regional meeting of CARICOM fishers, the CNFO-CU organised a three day regional fishers exchange, bringing together fishers from eight territories to share knowledge and take decisions on the sustainability of fishing in the Caribbean. The meeting entitled "Caribbean Fishers collaborating on suitable gear and techniques that will contribute to sustainable fisheries",

was held in Gouyave, Grenada, from April 1 to 3 2009 with funding provided by Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, United Nations Environment Programme and the Swedish International Development Agency. Participants were from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago. Also participating were the Grenada Fisheries Division and UWI-CERMES.

Recommendations were developed over the three days, regarding the most suitable fishing methods to allow for sustainable fisheries, while encouraging an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) for the lobster, reef fish, deep-sea snapper and pelagic fisheries in the Caribbean Region. Also coming out of exchange was the recommendation that Caribbean fisheries remain small-scale rather than strive to become large-scale or overly industrialized. Fisherfolk, consumers and other stakeholders must be allowed to play an active role in policies and management of Caribbean fisheries.



Some workshop participants getting tips in gear production while in Grenada

Barbados NFO elects new board



The new BARNUFO board (left to right): President, Ms. Vernel Nicholls; VP, Mr. Shirley Young; Treasurer, Mr. Alvin Cummins; and Assistant Secretary and PRO Mr. Dosty Weekes. Absent is Ms. Eulene Haynes, Secretary.

A new board has been elected to manage the affairs of the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisations (BARNUFO). The new President is Ms. Vernel Nicholls, who held the post of Vice President on the previous board and is also the president of the Bridgetown Fish Processors Association. Vice President is Mr. Shirley Young, who is a member of the Oistins Fisherfolk Association and former treasurer of that PFO. The Secretary is Ms. Eulene Haynes and the Treasurer is Mr. Alvin Cummins. Mr. Dosty Weekes is doing double-duty as both the Assistant Secretary and Public Relations Officer.

In its first official press statement since taking over the reins, the new board said it looked forward to working closely with the media to get across information to the general public in its efforts to advance the

welfare of fisherfolk within the industry in Barbados.

TT Agri Bank reaches out to fisherfolk



Representatives of TTUF and officials of the Agricultural Development Bank of Trinidad and Tobago discussing opportunities for the fisheries sector

In an attempt to arrive at a new policy that will promote the development of the agricultural sector, senior officials of the Agricultural Development Bank of Trinidad and Tobago have been meeting with representatives from across the sub-sectors, including fisheries.

During the month of February, the Seafood Industry Development Company (SIDC) facilitated two meetings between officials of the Bank and the fisheries sector. These consultations were held with representatives from the artisanal and industrial fisheries. Some of the topics discussed related to collateral for loans and the value of preparing a business plan. Discussions were also held on the role that The Trinidad and Tobago United Fisherfolk (TTUF) could play in recommending to the bank individuals in need of loans given

TTUF's relationship with the fisherfolk and its ability to provide the bank with information it would need to assist it with its deliberations.

CRFM works to raise Fisheries Policy awareness

Recognising that there is still a lack of knowledge among fishers and the wider public about the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) currently under development for the region, the CRFM has stepped up its information sharing efforts. As part of this effort, the CRFM held a panel discussion in Guyana on April 2 that brought together representatives from the Guyana fisheries sector, government, and the CARICOM and CRFM Secretariats to discuss benefits, drawbacks and common misconceptions surrounding the CFP.

The CRFM also continued its public awareness efforts later that month in the Commonwealth of Dominica where deputy executive director, Mr. Milton Haughton joined Dominica fisheries officer Mr. Harold Guiste and head of Dominica's National Association of Fisherfolk Cooperatives (NAFCo-Op), Mr. Glenis Popo on Kiri FM's weekday morning radio talk show *The Heng* where the ins and outs of the CFP were again tackled.



Panellists for the Guyana discussion were (from right): Deputy director of the CRFM Milton Haughton; Mr. Barry Joefield, senior project officer, agriculture development for CARICOM; Mr. Nigel Dharamllal, Chief Fisheries Officer for Guyana; Mr. Rueben Charles, Guyana Association of Trawler Owners and Seafood Processors; and Mr. Les Romahlo, member of the Guyana FAC and chairman of the Seafood Processing division of the Guyana Association of Trawler Owners and Seafood Processors

SIDC promoting fish on ice

In a bid to ensure that consumers are offered seafood of the highest quality at all times, the Seafood Industry Development Company has launched a campaign to promote the use of adequate amounts of ice in the handling, storage and retail of seafood. The campaign to promote awareness of the importance of ice in retaining quality from harvest to sale of fresh (chilled) seafood was launched on March 5, 2009, to coincide with the period when the greatest amount of seafood is consumed and also when the price of seafood is at its highest.

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