



PRESS RELEASE

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*Towards Sustainable Development of
Fisheries for the People of the Caribbean!*

CRFM Ministerial Council adopts Regional Protocol on Sustainable Use of Marine Living Resources



Chairman Sen. Hon. Avinash Singh notes that the Ministerial Council is responsible for providing the policy direction for technical experts to bring the CRFM's programs to fruition and to yield meaningful benefits for Caribbean people
(Photo: CARICOM Secretariat)

Belize City, Friday, 20 October 2023 (CRFM)—The Ministerial Council of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) recently convened its 13th Special Meeting during [Caribbean Week of Agriculture](#), held in The Bahamas. The Ministers passed 7 resolutions addressing matters such as the sustainable use of marine living resources, the need for a comprehensive independent survey of Caribbean waters to strengthen science and evidence-based decision making, as well as donor-funded projects to advance blue economic growth and the development of safe, climate-resilient products from Sargassum.

In her remarks to the Council, Dr. Carla Barnett, Secretary-General of the CARICOM Secretariat, underscored the vital importance of agriculture and regional fisheries to the Caribbean's food and nutrition security. She also emphasized the importance of research in fisheries for developing and implementing sound policies for the management of our fisheries across the region.

“The formulation of proactive policies by CRFM has allowed us to maintain strategic partnerships throughout this [post-pandemic] period, which together with the renewed interest in fisheries and agriculture that we are experiencing, has become the impetus for the region's blue economic growth and development,” Dr. Barnett said.

In furtherance of the CRFM's efforts to strengthen the impact of the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy, for which the CRFM is the Competent Agency responsible for its implementation, the Council approved a new regional protocol under the Policy on the Principle of Sustainable Use of Marine Living Resources for Blue Economic Growth and Sustainable Development of CRFM Member States.

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“Our shared goal is ensuring a prosperous and sustainable future for our countries and our people from our marine living resources, through enhanced partnerships, and the application of science, technology, and innovations,” CRFM Executive Director, Milton Haughton, said.

He added that, “The challenges we face in our endeavor to sustainably use our traditional and non-traditional living marine resources are substantial, but so too are the opportunities available to us, as well as our resolve to use these marine resources for prosperity of our people and sustainable development of our countries.”

The CRFM Ministerial Council discussed innovative solutions intended to shape the future of the region’s fisheries and to safeguard the health and productivity of its marine ecosystems and marine biodiversity, and ultimately, food security, as well as the livelihoods of fishing and coastal communities—all redounding to the advancement of the Caribbean Community.

The Ministers reiterated the urgent need to secure the services of the marine Research Vessel Dr. Fridtjof Nansen to conduct a comprehensive independent survey of the living marine resources in the offshore and deep waters of the Exclusive Economic Zones and extended continental shelves of Member States. This research would strengthen science and evidence-based decision making for policies and programmes to achieve blue economic growth and resource management through research and capacity building.

They also discussed the commencement of the US\$48 million GEF-funded regional project to address blue economic growth in the region through enhanced marine spatial planning and area-based fisheries management, climate-smart sustainable seafood value chain development, and knowledge management. This initiative is being implemented by the CRFM in collaboration with the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The Ministers also reviewed the progress being made under the New Zealand-funded project to create innovative, climate-resilient products from the Sargassum seaweed—an important marine living resource that has been blooming in massive quantities and inundating the coastal waters and beaches since 2011, creating serious problems for tourism and fisheries and coastal communities. The project which is being implemented in the region by the CRFM in partnership with the New Zealand Plant and Food Research Institute, and other regional partners such as CARDI and UWI Cave Hill Campus, has made impressive gains towards developing safe and effective liquid fertilizer from the Sargassum.

Sen. Hon. Avinash Singh, Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries, Trinidad and Tobago - Chair of the CRFM Ministerial Council, told fellow Ministers and heads of delegations from CRFM Member States: “As we form closer economic, political, and social ties to increase trade, investment, innovation, and cooperation, let us in these very challenging economic times, work together to achieve sustainability of our fisheries resources, maximize economic benefit and ensure food security for our people.”

– ENDS –

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For more photos, view the album on Flickr [here](#).

ABOUT THE CRFM:

The [Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism](#) (CRFM) was officially inaugurated on 27 March 2003 in Belize City, Belize, where it is headquartered, following the signing of the Agreement Establishing the CRFM on 4 February 2002. It is an inter-governmental organization whose mission is to promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region’s fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region.



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