



**SPEECH OF MILTON HAUGHTON,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CRFM  
AT THE OPENING OF THE FISHERIES WORKSHOP**

**20-21 November 2014, St. George's, Grenada**

**THEME: INVESTING IN BLUE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

20 November, 2014 – I extend a very warm welcome to all of you here today from across the Caribbean Region. I recognize and extend a special welcome to the representatives from the fisher's organization organizations, fish farmers organizations, the private sector, and Fisheries Division of CARICOM States who are here with us today. Special welcome also to our development partners including Dr. Patrick McConney from CERMES, UWI, Dr. EMMAMUEL Thouard from IFERMER.

On behalf of the CRFM and the participants from the CARICOM states and partner organisations I wish to thank the Government of Grenada for hosting this workshop. Special thanks to the Hon Minister, the Permanent Secretary, as well the Chief Fisheries Officer and staff of the Fisheries Department for the excellent support they have provided in preparation for this workshop.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to also recognize the significant contribution of the CTA. I commend the Director Michael Hailu on his recent appointment for another term of office, and I thank CTA for their support and commitment to the sustainable development and management fisheries and aquaculture in the CARICOM countries.

The CTA has been one of our key strategic development partners providing financial and technical assistance for development of the region's fisheries sector over the past 10 years. This workshop is possible only because of the generous support provided by the CTA.

CARICOM countries are all Small Island Developing States (SIDs). An important feature of SIDs is that they have small land masses but large ocean space.

The potential of the seas and oceans to meet sustainable development needs by providing employment, food, medicine and other human necessities is truly enormous.

Today, Oceans and seas provide a substantial portion of the global population with food and livelihoods. According to FAO, globally, more than 58 million people are directly employed in fisheries and aquaculture, and between 10-12% of the global population is dependent on the fisheries and aquaculture sector for their livelihoods.

The Blue Growth Concept is a long-term strategy to support sustainable economic growth and development by using the resources from the oceans and seas to meet the sustainable development needs of countries.

The concept has attracted a lot of attention in international fora and has been embraced as a key sustainable development strategy of several international organizations, providing a basis for action at the global, regional and national levels to increase food security, improve nutrition, reduce poverty of coastal communities and support sustainable management of aquatic resources.

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The Blue Growth initiative seeks to promote sustainable development by efficient use and conservation of aquatic renewable resources in the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and on the high seas, in an economically, socially and environmentally responsible manner.

There are 4 major components of the Blue Growth Initiative. These are: (1) marine and inland capture fisheries; (2) aquaculture development, (3) livelihoods and food systems, and (4) ecosystem services and marine biodiversity conservation at regional and national levels. It also includes balancing private sector interests and the provision of equitable benefits for coastal communities.

The potential of the coastal and marine resources to meet sustainable development needs in the CARICOM countries is enormous. But these resource systems need to be managed and maintained in a healthy and productive state through enhanced regional cooperation and partnership with international development partners.

The full potential of the sector will not be realized unless we can effectively deal with the challenges and threats to the health and productivity of oceans and seas arising from climate change and ocean acidification; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; pollution and degradation of marine biodiversity; inadequate policy and legal frameworks for conservation and management of the living marine resources and protection of the ecosystems; and inadequate data and information to guide policy development and implementation.

A major additional challenge we face in the Caribbean region is the limited knowledge and lack of appreciation by too many of our people of the value, importance and the potential of the ocean resources that we have available to us. And this gives rise to the low priority that is accorded to the sector by policy makers in too many of our countries.

This workshop will engage resource users, private sector representatives and government officials in discussions on ways to strengthen governance arrangement and adopt strategies and practical measures to maximize the value of fisheries and ocean resources to economic growth and resilience in our countries. This will include improving governance arrangements, and conservation and management of key marine species such as flyingfish, spiny lobster, and Nassau grouper.

We recently celebrated a major victory when we were able to adduce evidence of the regulatory systems, and scientific evidence on the state of the queen conch resources in our waters, and in so doing, were able to successfully resist a petition by an NGO to list the queen conch as a threatened or endangered species in the USA under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

However, we cannot afford to relax because there are many other species of commercial importance to our countries, for which we must work speedily to put in place better governance and management systems that can withstand international scrutiny, and will ensure long-term sustainable use of the resources.

We will therefore be discussing at this workshop,

- the implementation of the recently adopted Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP),
- the draft regional agreement on conservation, management and sustainable use of the Caribbean spiny lobster,
- as well as steps to enhance the conservation and management of the Nassau grouper, and
- implementation of the recently adopted Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for the flyingfish fisheries.

We will also be discussing how to improve value addition and trade capacity for fish and seafoods; and how to promote aquaculture development in our countries

Mr. Chairman, I want to say a few words about aquaculture before I close.

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In 1970, most seafood was harvested from wild stocks, with aquaculture contributing just about 3% of total fish production. Today aquaculture is the fastest growing food production sector in the world.

In 2014, according to FAO estimates, aquaculture became a larger source of fish and seafood for human consumption than catches from marine capture fisheries targeting wild fish stocks.

Overall, wild harvest is still larger due to non-food uses such as the production of fishmeal and animal food. The increased importance of aquaculture is partly due the fact that landings from marine capture fisheries reached a plateau in the late 1980s and has remained fairly stable. Fisheries experts do not believe that it will be possible to increase capture production much.

The growth we have seen in aquaculture is also partly due to a massive increase in productivity as scientific knowledge and techniques for sustainable aquaculture have improved and are employed in production and processing.

Also, the demand for fish and seafood continues to grow and it is now easier than ever before to participate in international trade and gain access to markets overseas.

Commercial aquaculture began in the region in the mid 1970s, and production increased steadily to just under 19,000 MT in 2004-2005 due mainly to strong growth in Belize.

Since the global economic crisis, aquaculture production in the region has declined dramatically to about 8,000 MT in 2012, with the main reduction coming from a collapse of the industry in Jamaica, where production fell from over 5000 MT to just above 500 MT in 2012. This has been due the termination of aquaculture production by one company that for a long time dominated aquaculture in Jamaica.

The time has now come when we must have a serious look at aquaculture and begin to put in place the policies and systems to overcome the impediments to the growth and expansion of aquaculture in the region. As I look around I see that in all other regions of the world, from Asia, to Africa, from Australia to the Pacific Islands, from Europe to North America, South America and Central America they are on the move with aquaculture production.

We need to get our act together and provide the necessary policy support and incentives to our fish farmers and private sector investors to develop the sector and increase production not just for local consumption but also for exports to earn foreign exchange, generate employment opportunities, and create wealth for our people.

Aquaculture is indeed an important area for blue economic growth in our countries.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you and may God bless you.

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## **BACKGROUND**

The workshop organized by the CRFM in collaboration with CNFO under the support of CTA (ACP-EU) brings together stakeholders from the fisheries sector including media to deepen their understanding of the “blue growth concept” over November 20-21, 2014 by raising public awareness in the Caribbean by deepening knowledge and capacity of primary industry stakeholders for

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more effective stakeholder positioning and participation in fisheries policy and management actions.

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