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

**CRFM Secretariat, Belize  
2007**

# **CRFM Technical & Advisory Document – Number 2007/ 5**

## **Report of the National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organization in Dominica**

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

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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 fisher folk 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 fisher folk 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 fisherfolk 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 Fisherfolk 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 Dominica was part of the project aimed at promoting the establishment of National Fisherfolk Organisations (NFOs) in the Group II countries.

## **2.0 Welcome and Opening Remark**

The National Consultation to launch a National Fisherfolk Organization (NFO) in the Commonwealth of Dominica was held at the Roseau Fisheries Complex (RFC), on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2007, with twenty-one participants taking part. Persons present included the representatives of five registered Fisherman's Cooperatives; three fishers groups; one fishing company; five Fisheries Officers; the Chief Fisheries Officer, Mr. Andrew Magloire; the Corporate Services Manager, CRFM Secretariat, Mr. Anthony Mills; representative of the BFCA, Mrs. Barbara Bradley; two representatives from the Cooperatives Division, including the Cooperatives Commissioner, Mr. Edward Henderson; and individual fishers.

The welcome and opening remarks were made by the Chief Fisheries Officer, who took the opportunity to highlight the purpose of the Consultation and encouraged the fishermen to actively participate in the discussions on the topics which would be presented. The Corporate Services Manager, CRFM Secretariat, gave some introductory remarks, which included an overview of the process leading up to the Consultation to launch an NFO in Dominica.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment, Mrs. Claudia Bellot, gave the feature address. She offered apologies on behalf of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment, who had to attend a Cabinet meeting.

The Permanent Secretary then welcomed all participants and indicated that although there existed many primary fisherfolk organizations in Dominica, there was no NFO, This being so, she pointed out that it would be necessary to examine the legal and institutional requirements necessary for the formation of such an organization. She noted that this Project which was intended to build the institutional capabilities of fisherfolk organizations would complement existing Government efforts aimed at enhancing the income generating capacities of fisher folk through various incentives.

She pointed out that a strong NFO was necessary for being involved in fisheries resources management and taking advantage of the new and modern fisheries development infrastructure provided by the Government namely: the Marigot and Roseau Fisheries Complexes. She indicated that the willingness of fishers to be present at the Consultation and to get organized to form an NFO, demonstrated their commitment to manage their own affairs and gain maximum benefits from initiatives being undertaken by the Government of Dominica. The Permanent Secretary encouraged the fishermen to work together towards the formation of the NFO and to look forward to the establishment of CARNUFO, which would enable them to continue to build and to further enhance their own capacity for co-management of the fisheries resources in

Dominica. She declared the Consultation open and wished the participants well in their deliberations.

The Facilitator, Mr. Harold Guiste thanked the Permanent Secretary for her words of encouragement and support for the Consultation, and the Government Information Service for covering and promoting the event. Sincere thanks were extended to all others who were present for their attendance at the Opening Ceremony.

### **3.0 Introduction of Participants**

All representatives of primary fisherfolk organizations present introduced themselves and indicated the organization that they represented. The resource persons, including Fisheries and Cooperative Officers and the CRFM Secretariat Team, also introduced themselves. The full list of participants is given at **Appendix 1** and the Agenda for the consultation at **Appendix 2**.

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

Corporate Services Manager gave an overview of the Project, highlighting the series of events which lead to the actual implementation of the consultation process for the launching of a National Fisherfolk Organization in Dominica and its relevance to the formation of a CARNUFO.

He also gave a brief illustration on organizational development, indicating that while the executive body of an organization was very important for its effective functioning, generally too much emphasis was placed on it. This was usually done at the expense of the lower level of the organizational structure, the membership, of the organization. He explained that the membership of fisherfolk organizations formed the lifeblood of the organization and that training and education was critical to building up their knowledge base and skills in order to form a strong organization. In the same way, capacity building and institutional strengthening were key to building a strong NFO and a prerequisite to the formation of CARNUFO.

### **4.1 Discussion**

The fishers present indicated that both an NFO and CARNUFO could play a part in addressing the issue of IUU fishing by foreign fishers from neighbouring islands, and sought clarification on how fishers from non-CARICOM countries, like the French Islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, could be associated with these entities in order to address the matter raised. It was explained that the issues of IUU fishing and access rights could possibly be addressed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the implementing mechanism for the Common Fisheries Policy and Regime, which was being negotiated among CARICOM Member States.

## **5.0 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.

### **5.1 Discussion**

Fishers thought that community sensitization to get more persons involved in PFO formation was lacking, with this deficiency being presented as the cause for failure of some organizations in Dominica. It was indicated that lack of sensitization was also a cause in poor succession planning since new persons with relevant management and communication skills were not forthcoming. As such, existing leaders had to serve for many terms before any changes could be made and that was not necessarily good for the organization.

Some fishers pointed out that lack of access to information and education and awareness was also a hindrance to the advancement of PFOs in Dominica.

Participants agreed that they needed to get better organized for the challenges facing fisherfolk in Dominica. They saw a real need for advocacy for fisherfolk, since other groups in the country like the Dominica Hotel and Tourism Association (DHTA) were getting Government's attention and encouragement for increased utilization of the marine space at the expense of fishers in some cases. The need for the formation of an NFO in Dominica was viewed by participants as being very relevant and timely.

All participants present agreed unanimously that they wanted to form and be part of an NFO in Dominica and to work towards becoming part of CARNUFO as well.

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

In his presentation, the Cooperatives Commissioner spoke to the matter of the legal requirements for the formation of an NFO. In so doing, he observed that there were unregistered primary fisherfolk groups present. He indicated that an NFO could be formed to include such groups, but that would pose some problems as it related to their status on the NFO. He explained that if unregistered groups were allowed to have same status as registered cooperatives then it would encourage free riders which would not be good for the long term viability of the organization.

The Cooperative Commissioner in outlining the process for the formation of an NFO for Dominica advised as follows:

1. The membership of the NFO would need to be identified, in terms of registered and non-registered primary fisherfolk organizations. The membership could be primary cooperatives only or primary cooperatives and primary groups depending on what the fisher folk themselves decided.
2. Once the membership was properly identified, a process of training and education would need to be done in order to build the necessary management and communication skills which would be required for proper functioning of the organization.
3. Development of by-laws that would outline rules of procedure and to give legal status to the NFO.
4. Registration of the NFO by the Cooperative Division once all the requirements had been met.

The Cooperative Commissioner pledged his support for the formation of the NFO for Dominica and stated that he would provide the necessary technical assistance to the participants to help them achieve their objective.

## **6.1 Discussion**

Some of the groups present that were not registered fisheries cooperatives wanted to know how they would fit into an NFO. Following on some discussion, it was agreed by all present that it would be necessary for all unregulated groups to be registered before becoming a member of the NFO should it take the form of a cooperative.

The Cooperative Commissioner indicated that cooperatives with a small membership were not viable and therefore the Cooperative Division was in the process of promoting the formation of District Cooperative Societies. This was being done in an effort to include many more communities and to increase the number of members available for forming a cooperative society. He urged fisheries groups that were deemed too small as to be viable, to become part of the

District Cooperative initiative as the interests of fisherfolk could be represented on such primary organizations.

Considering that there were twenty-six designated fish landing sites in Dominica, with only four registered fishermen's cooperatives existing in the country, participants were concerned that forming an NFO using these four PFOs would not be truly representative of the fisherfolk of Dominica. The Cooperatives Commissioner indicated that there was no problem or hindrance or need for slowing down the process. Since, the NFO could be established with existing registered PFOs, and the non-registered groups could be incorporated into the NFO with a different status as stipulated by the by-laws of the NFO.

The Chief Fisheries Officer cautioned strongly against non-registered, unregulated groups being part of the NFO as they would enjoy similar benefits as registered groups but could not be held legally accountable.

It was agreed that the participants during the process of the formation of the NFO should consider this matter, with two options being given:

1. The non-registered groups could become members of the NFO provided that they would become registered by a stipulated time. The NFO would help the groups as much as possible to develop the necessary capacity to become legally registered cooperatives.
2. The non-registered groups would work to become registered legal entities before gaining membership into the NFO. In such cases the Cooperative Division would provide the necessary assistance to meet that objective.

The issue of decision making of the NFO arose. Participants were informed that decisions would be taken by majority vote. Some participants thought that some of the decisions that would need to be taken were too important and would probably be too far reaching to be decided upon by simple majority vote. Therefore, they suggested that decision should be by consensus. However, it was pointed out that decision by consensus was not provided for in the laws governing cooperatives. An option was presented in which the group could include in its by-laws provisions for up to two thirds majority voting. This was deemed acceptable 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 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 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**

In response to queries on the funding of the BFCA, participants were informed that financial contributions were made annually by the PFOs to fund the operations of the NFO. Participants were very impressed with the benefits being provided by the National Fishermen's Cooperative Society Limited, such as subsidies on ice, interest free loans, patronage bonus, and in the areas of health and burial.

There was a lot of interest in the management arrangements of the BFCA, with it being explained that this organization appointed a managing committee every year to plan and implement the activities of the organization, and further appointed an executive manager to manage its operations on a daily basis.

## **8.0 The Way Forward**

Considering that there was unanimous agreement by all the fisher folk represented at the Consultation for the formation of an NFO, they decided to start the process towards forming a National Fisherfolk Organization in Dominica. Participants discussed among themselves and presented the following as areas that they would like to be addressed by an NFO: fisheries resource management, education and training, sourcing of fishing gear and equipment and advocacy.

The participants decided that in terms of the formation of an NFO, they would prefer to form a cooperative entity rather than an association to represent the fisherfolk of Dominica. Presently in Dominica there are five active fishermen's cooperatives; four dormant fishermen's cooperatives and four study groups.

The participants agreed that all present should be members of a Core Committee to help take the process forward. They then decided on the formation of a Steering Committee comprising of the registered cooperatives and non-registered groups that were represented to be the catalyst for driving the process. The Steering Committee was given a mandate by the Core Committee to promote the idea of the NFO and CARNUFO and to seek a mandate from the membership of their respective organizations to become members of the proposed NFO. The members of the Steering Committee are listed below:

Glennis Popo – Committee Coordinator  
Aurelius Joseph  
Cecil Bertrand  
Julius Henry  
Joseph Thomas  
Walter Jeremy  
Austin Harris  
(see **Appendix 1** for designations of committee members)

The Steering Committee was given a three week time frame by which it should get its work done and report back to the larger Core Committee. It was agreed that all present at the Consultation would be back on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2007 when the Steering Committee would present its findings and decide on an organizational structure for the NFO. The Chief Fisheries Officer pledged his support to cover the cost of promotion and for holding the second meeting at the Roseau Fisheries Complex.

It was further agreed that after the meeting of the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2007, the Cooperative Division would assist the group in the drafting of the by laws, which would be completed by the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2007.

Upon completion of this process, the Cooperative Division would conduct a pre-registration seminar to provide information and to deal with procedural issues as it relates to the operations of a cooperative society. The final step would be the registration of the NFO.

At the end of the Consultation, the Chief Fisheries Officer in his closing remarks invited and urged the fishers to take a stake in the management of the fisheries resources of Dominica by seriously moving ahead to establish the NFO. He explained that they should be business-like in their approach and that the formation of an NFO could bring about economic benefit, create social interaction and solidarity among fisherfolk on the Island for the protection of their livelihoods.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

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

<u>Names</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Designation</u>
Austin Harris	Dominica Fisheries Cooperative	General Secretary
Walter Jeremy	Marigot Fisheries Cooperative	Secretary
Cecil Bertrand	Newtown Fisheries Co-operative	Secretary
Julius Henry	Mahaut Fishermen Inc.	President
Joseph Thomas	St. Joseph Fisheries Group	President
Nicholas Bruno	Woodford Hill Fisheries Groups	President
Glenis Popo	Fond Cole Fishers Group	President
Aurelius Joseph	Vielle Case Fisheries Group	President
Anderson Hypolite	Portsmouth	Interested Fisher
David Leblanc	Anse – Di – Mai	Interested Fisher
William Common	Pottersville	Interested Fisher
Kimanie Mourillon	San Sauveur	Interested Fisher
Ezekiel Azille	Cottage Toucarie Fisherman	Interested Fisher
Hypolite Wallace	Capuchin	Interested Fisher
Jack Harry	Portsmouth	Interested Fisher
Oliver Green	Morne Daniel	Interested Fisher
Desmond Bertrand	Dublanc	Interested Fisher
Samuel Joseph	Dublanc	Interested Fisher
Sherwin Williams	Canefield	Interested Fisher
Rennick Toussaint	Cooperative Division	Co-operatives Officer
Edward Henderson	Cooperative Division	Co-operative Commissioner
Andrew Magloire	Fisheries Division	Chief Fisheries Officer
Sharon Corriette	Fisheries Division	Data Officer
Riviere Sebastian	Fisheries Division	Fisheries Officer
Kerr Serrant	Fisheries Division	Extension Officer
Derrick Theophile	Fisheries Division	Extension Officer
Anthony Mills	CRFM Secretariat	Corporate Services Manager
Barbara Bradley	BFCA	Executive Secretary
Harold Guiste	Dominica Fisheries Division	Facilitator

## Appendix 2.

### National Consultation to Launch a National Fisherfolk Organisation (NFO) in Dominica

#### Agenda

##### Opening Ceremony

- 08:30 - 08:35      Opening Remarks – Chief Fisheries Officer , Mr. Andrew Magloire
- 08:35 – 08:45      Brief Remarks - Mr. Anthony Mills, CRFM Secretariat
- 08:45 - 08:55      Feature Address – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
- 08:55 – 09:00      Vote of thanks -- Harold Guiste, Senior Fisheries Officer,

##### Working Session

- 09:00 – 10:05      Introduction of participants
- 10:05 – 10:20      Presentation – **Overview of CTA/CRFM Project: *Development of Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations*** – CRFM Secretariat
- 10:20 – 10:30      Discussion
- 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 [Country] – Objectives, Role and Functions, etc.
2:30 – 3:00	Way Forward