



For Immediate Release

Caribbean fisherfolk strengthen their capacity to participate in governance

Port of Spain. November 11, 2015. Fisherfolk leaders from Anguilla, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recently convened and participated in the final round of National Fisherfolk Workshops in their respective countries under the *Strengthening Caribbean Fisherfolk to Participate in Governance* project, during the period September 15 to October 21, 2015. These Workshops were aimed at providing fisherfolk with the opportunity to meet and actively identify and determine solutions to challenges facing them in their fisherfolk organisations and livelihood activities.

During the Workshops, fisherfolk leaders, in collaboration with representatives from Fisheries Authorities and Cooperative Departments in each country, shared their experiences in addressing problems previously identified, as well as looked for policy opportunities at the national, regional and international levels to address their priority issues. High cost of fishing operations, insufficient provision of social protection for fisherfolk, inadequate leadership and failure to attract members to participate in fisherfolk organisations were common challenges that emerged from each Workshop.



Participants at the National Fisherfolk Workshop in Barbados developing a project proposal on social protection for fisherfolk

One of the key messages coming out of the Workshops was that fisherfolk needed to continue to build the capacity of their organisations to not only represent themselves, but also to be financially sustainable. The issue of securing funding for projects to help build organisational capacity, however, was identified as a challenge for many of the countries.

At their respective Workshops, fisherfolk leaders from the Anguilla Fisherfolk Association (AFFA), Castries Fishermen's Cooperative Society Limited (CFCSL) and the Saint Lucia Fisherfolk Cooperative Society (SLFCSL) informed participants that they had each recently been successful in obtaining funding for projects under the *Fisherfolk Strengthening Fund* of the *Strengthening Caribbean Fisherfolk to Participate in Governance* project. The projects are aimed at improving the leadership, management and communication capacities in the fisherfolk cooperative societies in Anguilla and Saint Lucia.

Horace Walters, President of the Saint Lucia Fisherfolk Cooperative Society Limited, assured his group that the national fisherfolk organisation is "not just about representing the cooperatives, it is for all of us; all the fishermen".

At the Barbados Workshop, fisherfolk leaders called for an improved and attractive social protection package for the small-scale fisheries sector. President of the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisations (BARNUFO), Vernel Nicholls, said, "Social security has become a pressing matter for small-scale fisheries." She noted that the Small-scale Fisheries (SSF) Guidelines could provide the opportunity to successfully achieving social security (e.g. vessel insurance, national insurance, health/life insurance) for all in the industry.

During the Barbados Workshop, participants collaborated in developing a project to address social protection in the small-scale fisheries. Participants were informed that BARNUFO would seek to mobilise resources to implement the project.

The Workshops were convened under the European Union funded (€1,03m) Strengthening Caribbean Fisherfolk to Participate in Governance project, which is targeting fisherfolk organisations in the countries of Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Turks and Caicos. The project is aimed at improving the contribution of the small-scale fisheries sector to food security in these countries through building the capacity of regional and national fisherfolk organisation networks to participate in fisheries governance and management. It is being implemented by CANARI, working in partnership with the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies of the University of the West Indies (UWI-CERMES), Panos Caribbean, Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) and Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM).

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About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute is a regional, technical, non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for more than 20 years. Our mission is to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing natural resources critical to development. Our programmes focus on research, sharing and dissemination of lessons learned, capacity building and fostering regional partnerships.

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