



Centre for Environment
Fisheries & Aquaculture
Science



GOVERNMENT OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS



For Immediate Release

Virgin Islands Fisherfolk get inspiration from their Barbadian peers

Port of Spain, August 15, 2023 – From July 19-21, four fisherfolk representatives and one representative from the Virgin Islands' Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DOAF) participated in a three-day fisherfolk peer learning exchange to Barbados.

The exchange, which was hosted by the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisation (BARNUFO) with the kind support of the Barbados Fisheries Division, allowed the participants to engage with a functioning umbrella fisherfolk organisation in Barbados and learn how they are involved in fisheries management and decision making. Participants were also exposed to learning opportunities on topics such as stewardship, gender in fisheries, fisherfolk leadership, sustainable fisheries and application of innovative fishing technology. Sessions were facilitated by the Barbados Fisheries Division, Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZMU), Morgan's Fish House Inc., Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies of the University of the West Indies (UWI-CERMES), Central Fish Processors Association and fisherfolk at the Bridgetown Fisheries Complex, Weston, Pile Bay, and Oistins Landing Sites.



Peer exchange participants visit Morgan Fish House Inc.- (L-R) Mr. Rondel Smith, VI fisherfolk rep; Ms. Catherine Sandiford- Tull, Treasurer, BARNUFO; Mr. Krystino Vialva, VI fisherfolk rep; Ms. Kia Soares, Fisheries Assistant, DOAF; Mr. Brent Brodie, VI fisherfolk rep; Mr. Kirby Hodge, VI Fisherfolk rep; Mr. Kyle Harris, Managing Director, Morgan Fish House Inc. © BARNUFO

Ms. Vernel Nicholls, President, BARNUFO expressed her organisation's pleasure in being able to host the Virgin Island participants, noting that "It was a very good experience, not only for them but for us also." She added, "[The exchange] allowed our guests to observe the way the Barbados fisheries sector is structured and the importance of government, private sector and fisherfolk working together to manage and sustain the fisheries resources."



Peer exchange participants during a visit to a fish aggregating device (FAD) at Weston. © BARNUFO

One of the exchange participants, Mr. Brent Brodie, who is also the Chair of the interim committee of fisherfolk working toward the formation and formalisation of a network for Virgin Islands fisherfolk was impressed by BARNUFO's level of organisation and noted that the exchange highlighted the benefits of being organised. Brodie said, "There are a lot of benefits to being in an association [including] learning opportunities, being involved in decision-making, partnering with the private sector and networking with other Caribbean countries."

Ms. Kia Soares, Fisheries Assistant, who represented DOAF on the exchange, said "our fishers learnt a lot and were able to experience a different way of fishing and culture". She added, "I'm glad we got this opportunity, especially [to show] just how important and effective an active and working fisherfolk organisation can be for its members".

The fisherfolk peer learning exchange is part of capacity building efforts by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) under the ongoing Darwin Plus-funded project "Capacity building in fisheries evidence, networks and management in the Virgin Islands" to support the development of a formalised network of fisherfolk in the Virgin Islands to enable greater participation in decision-making. The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) in the United Kingdom (UK), which is part of the UK government's Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), is implementing the project in partnership with CANARI and DOAF within the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change of the Government of the Virgin Islands.

To find out more about Cefas' work on this project: Abandoned, Lost and otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) to support sustainable fisheries in the Virgin Islands, please visit [this blog](https://canari.org/cefas-bvi/). For more information on CANARI's and CNFO's work on the project please visit the CANARI webpage at <https://canari.org/cefas-bvi/>.

END

About Cefas: The UK Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) are the UK Government's marine and freshwater science experts, working for healthy and productive oceans, seas and rivers and safe and sustainable seafood. We work to safeguard human and animal health, enable food security and support marine economies. We use our research and innovation expertise to work towards a sustainable blue future for the planet. For more information on Cefas and the work we do, visit www.cefas.co.uk.

About DOAF: The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DOAF) is a part of the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change of the Government of the Virgin Islands. The Department is responsible for ensuring food is safe, nutritionally sound, produced and harvested in an environmentally sustainable manner that builds resilience to internal and external shocks while contributing to the economic growth, social well-being and protection of the natural environment. For more information, see: <https://bvi.gov.vg/content/ministry-education-and-culture>.

About CNFO: The Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) is a regional network of small-scale fisherfolk and their organisations operating across the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The network is committed to the realization of profitable and sustainable fisheries that support fisherfolk

livelihoods, promote effective ecosystem-based management of fisheries resources, contribute to food security for Caribbean communities and increase resilience to risks including climate change. For more information on CNFO, see: <https://cnfo.fish/>.

About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for 30 years. Our mission is to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean. Our work focuses on Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Equity and Justice, Resilience and Participatory Governance. For more information on CANARI, see: <https://www.canari.org/>.

Connect with us:



For further information, please contact:

Anna Cadiz-Hadeed, Programmes Director, CANARI at anna@canari.org