

**Marine Resource
Governance in the
Eastern Caribbean
(MarGov Project)**

**CERMES MarGov Project Document
6**



**Report of the Fishers Forum: “Fisher
folk and fisheries scientists linking
and learning together” at the 60th Gulf
and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI),
Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, 5-9
November 2007**



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**Grant funds provided by
IDRC Rural Poverty and
Environment Program**



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Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat**



November 2007

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Citation

CERMES and CRFM. 2007. Report of the Fishers Forum: "Fisher folk and fisheries scientists linking and learning together" at the 60th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, 5-9 November 2007. CERMES MarGov Project Document 6. Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies, Barbados. 16 pp.

Abstract

- A Fishers Forum, with the theme “fisher folk and fisheries scientists linking and learning together” was organised at GCFI by the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) and Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat to support the project *Development of Caribbean Network of Fisher Folk Organizations* being implemented in partnership with the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation (CTA) in CRFM Member States. About forty fishers, scientists, managers, students, persons from NGOs and other interested parties participated.
- A relationship between GCFI and the CRFM initiative to network fisher folk organisations is required. If funds can be raised early, the initiative may be able to get fishers to GCFI on a regular basis and to hold a Fishers Forum as part of the regular programme (not late and without interpretation). Such sessions should be focused on a few topics with clear guidelines as to what is expected from fishers.
- Environmental education and outreach is urgently needed throughout the region e.g. Gulf of Honduras, for small-scale fishers. This could be a combined initiative of universities and NGOs catalysed by GCFI.
- Stories of success in small-scale fisheries management (sustainable use) are not shared as much as doom and gloom. There are examples of fisher self-organisation, regulation and empowerment. Share these at GCFI, in a session on fisheries governance. CERMES and others may assist in organisation.
- Small-scale fishers perceive and experience mainly negative interactions with mass tourism, MPAs and a variety of areas of GCFI interest. These should be future topics for GCFI, reaching out to emerging key issues (e.g. examine how to build links with regional tourism groups like CAST, CHA and others).
- At all sessions there was a mood to support and give voice to fishers, especially to develop research agendas for collaborative work with scientists and managers. This suggests an immediate opportunity for GCFI to expand travel support sponsorship in collaboration with fisher and other groups regionally.
- Alternative, supplementary and complementary livelihood options (besides tourism) are burning issues.
- GCFI should strengthen its promotion of interdisciplinary research and cross-disciplinary dialogue to be of greater practical benefit to address real issues facing fisher folk before they become major problems.

Acknowledgements

The Board and Program Committee of the GCFI made it possible to hold the Forum as a ‘side session’ by providing the facilities and equipment. Travel sponsorship for the fisher leaders of the session came from the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) Regional Co-ordinating Unit and the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers (CaMPAM) network. Several bilingual participants facilitated communication across the Spanish-English language barrier during the Forum.

This work was also carried out with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada. The views expressed do not represent those of the IDRC. Maritime boundaries shown on any maps in this publication do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the IDRC or CERMES. Unless otherwise stated, material in this publication may be freely reproduced provided suitable credit is given.

1. Background

From its inception the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) has addressed issues of concern to commercial and recreational fishers. Over time the focus changed from the large fisheries of the USA to the small-scale fisheries of the Wider Caribbean and now to a range of recreational and commercial fisheries of several scales in many countries. Over this period the focus also changed from development to management and conservation, and the proportion of fisher participants at GCFI declined for a while as practically-oriented presentations, workshops and field trips gave way to academically-oriented science. Now the trend is for increasing fisher participation as the importance of resource users is appreciated.

The annual meeting of the GCFI has the potential to be the leading forum at which fishers, managers, researchers, students and others interested in Caribbean fisheries regularly exchange ideas and information (see programme at Appendix 1). The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat, in partnership with the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation (CTA), is implementing a *Project on Development of Caribbean Network of Fisher Folk Organizations* (FFO project) from 2006 to 2008 in CRFM Member States. The overall objective of the FFO project is “to contribute to improved income earnings, higher standards of living of fisher folk and sustainable use of fishery resources in the Caribbean”. The specific purpose is “institutional capacities of fisher folk organizations developed at the regional, national and community levels”.

The coincident timing of the FFO project and the 60th GCFI provided an excellent opportunity to arrange for a fishers forum to promote the interaction described above and to learn lessons from the experience. The Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Cave Hill Campus in Barbados proposed the forum to the CRFM Secretariat, and received the funding and logistical support to implement it as a supplement to the CERMES project on Marine Resource Governance in the Eastern Caribbean (MarGov).

1.1 Objective and outcomes

The stated purpose of Fishers’ Forum was to provide a scheduled opportunity for the fishers at 60th GCFI to share information on fishing, science and management amongst themselves and with people involved in applied participatory fisheries research. The thinking behind this was that the anticipated project output of a regional network of FFOs would be deficient unless links were formed primarily between fisheries scientists working in the region and fisher folk. Equipped with a better appreciation of fisheries science and being able to contribute to science, fisher folk could then play much more informed and effective roles in national and regional fisheries through their organisations.

Thus the main expected outcomes were:

- Selected fisher leaders better informed on science methods, results and applications
- Selected fisher leaders better able to network and draw on network resources through new or stronger personal contacts with other fisher leaders and fisheries scientists
- Fisheries scientists know more about what fishers think about and want from fisheries science, and perhaps develop ideas for closer collaboration with fishers in the field

1.2 Arrangements

A full description of the forum arrangements will not be provided here, but many lessons were learnt about selecting fisher participants and about travel logistics. A core team planned the forum. They were:

- Everton Brathwaite, fishing industry, Barbados
- Brian Davy, IISD senior research fellow, Canada
- Winston Hobson, fishing industry, Nevis
- Havelan Honeyghan, fishing industry, Jamaica
- Anderson Kinch, fishing industry, Barbados
- Mitchell Lay, fishing industry, Antigua

Note that participation of the core team at GCFI was financed through a variety of projects and sponsors. Fishers from Spanish-speaking countries, primarily the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Mexico also came to GCFI mainly through

- Patrick McConney, CERMES, UWI, Barbados
- Terrence Phillips, CRFM Secretariat

the intervention of various scientists and their research project funding.

Team members had multiple credentials and roles. All except Terrence Phillips were able to attend the forum. The forum was originally intended to be a small (~20 people) meeting of selected scientists and fishers taking place concurrently with the regular GCFI session. Due to conditions on site it became an open session for all GCFI participants, scheduled at the end of the regular programme and overlapping with a reception.

The forum was held from 6-8pm on Tuesday 6 November 2007 in the main conference room. It was co-chaired by fishers Anderson Kinch and Mitchell Lay. Kinch is on the GCFI board of directors and Lay leads the CRFM FFO project's fisher folk coordinating unit (CU).

2. Fishers Forum

2.1 Welcome and introductions

The agenda (Appendix 2) was shown, and Anderson Kinch opened forum by welcoming the large number of participants (Appendix 3) that included about a dozen fishers. He was pleased with attendance given the hour and competing activities. He noted that yesterday's fishers fished because they had to for food and survival whereas today many people fish because they want to as part of their culture and lifestyle. Today's fishers challenged scientists. Not all fisheries science is accepted by fishers, but scientists are saluted when their facts are true. However, communication between fishers and scientists is not as good as it should be. The same lists of issues come up at meetings such as GCFI without collaboration to seek innovative solutions. It was tiresome. He hoped that the dialogue made possible by the forum would change things. Members of the core team were introduced. Notes were taken by Patrick McConney and Brian Davy. Others translated to and from Spanish for participants. Some took photographs (Appendix 4).

2.2 Presentations

Presentations on the aims of the forum, networking and learning, organisations and science, and topics for consideration were made to set the context for the forum (Appendix 5). Patrick McConney shared the aims and arrangements as explained in the introduction above. Anderson Kinch's slides summarised the concluding sections of his oral presentation from the previous day in the session on *Management and Socio-Economics of Marine Fisheries and Recreational Fisheries*. Mitchell Lay shared information on the FFO project and the incentives motivating fishers, managers and scientists to network. See Appendix 3.

The last slide showed a list of topics suggested for discussion by fishers and scientists who expressed interest in attending the forum through the GCFINET list. The topics were displayed for information rather than as an agenda since many of the fishers and other participants did not have the opportunity to contribute via GCFINET. As the forum was opened for discussion the audience was asked to let fishers speak first since it was their moment to take the spotlight in the primarily scientific GCFI meeting.

2.3 Discussion

Fishers from Guatemala thanked their sponsors for travel support and congratulated GCFI for the high level of participation by women and the many people fighting to preserve nature. They wanted to know more about GCFI as an organisation and what it could do for them. They want viable, responsible fisheries that do not harvest fish that are too small. However, small-scale fishers typically are not exposed to fisheries science and management. They do not know how to manage fisheries. Biologists need to share information with fishers and others need to help fishers to organising. They appreciated the FFO networking being lead by Lay.

There is overfishing in the Gulf of Honduras which is almost enclosed by Honduras, Guatemala and Belize. The countries need coordinated fisheries closures and other harmonised management measures. However, poor fishers lack resources to get the best or recommended fishing equipment. They use old

equipment, even if it is against the law, mainly due to lack of finances. The Guatemalan fishers wanted a public statement to be made after the meeting, directed to NGOs and governments, and bearing the signatures of participants. They would take the statement to higher authorities and use it as leverage for the support and resources they were seeking. This was, however, outside the scope of the forum.

A fisher from Mexico expressed interest in the FFO project, noting that similar initiatives had been tried in his country since the 1960s. Mitchell Lay emphasised that the English-speaking groups in the FFO project want to link with fisher groups in Spanish-speaking countries.

Another intervention from Mexico noted that it was good to hear, in a previous session on groupers, about the contribution of fishers to management. The speaker wanted to return home with tangible benefits from GCFI and to share information on their successes in Punta Allen where they do their own patrols. Fishes have avoided using SCUBA so as to limit exploitation. Fishers there also wanted to avoid the high level of mass tourism seen in Cancun. Fishers wanted to have a say in controlling tourism in Punta Allen as do fishers in many other Caribbean tourism destinations. It was accepted that laws and policies are supposed to control resource use at a high level, but fishers need to be responsible for controlling fisheries resource uses at the community level. It was also noted that fishers are blamed for resource depletion even when the real causes are hurricanes or other non-fishing circumstances. The speaker invited others to see Punta Allen as a model fishing community.

The president of the fisher association in Punta Cana said he had several problems needing urgent solutions. Fishers lacked the fisheries resources needed to feed their families, but were conservation oriented. With the cooperation of hotel resorts they had banned gill nets and do not take small lobsters. They were trying to create a protected area. They collaborated with many people and wanted to thank them for support, including Reef Check and the University of Miami. However, this external assistance was not sufficient. They needed more help with organising, managing themselves and managing tourism.

The chairman of the Jamaican umbrella fishing cooperative said that he had 21 primary cooperatives in his organisation. Hurricanes Ivan and Dean had caused much damage resulting in considerable hardship for members. Over 90% of fishing takes place on the south coast of Jamaica which was hardest hit. Recently, scientists predicted there could be 14-24 hurricanes annually, and therefore the situation was likely to worsen especially since the hurricane season coincides with the best fishing season there. However, he noted that Jamaica's fishing banks were already overfished and this was compounded by illegal foreign fishing, for conch and lobster in particular, as illustrated by recent arrests at sea.

The Jamaican cooperative leader thanked GCFI for its 60 years of service, and thanked CRFM for the opportunity to participate. It was his duty to take information back to his country. He was concerned about the content of talks that reflected a top-down approach to management and wanted to see more use of bottom-up approaches. Jamaica was willing to assist other fisher groups. Fisher folk need to have a say in what is happening. Problems would persist until they became more involved. He said that he was not afraid to call high ranking policy-makers to make the views of fishers known. In Jamaica fishers do not allow others to speak for them; they speak for themselves. He invited other fisher groups to join them in communicating to improve fisheries.

A fisher from south Florida who had many accreditations and affiliations stressed the need to put fishers' traditional knowledge alongside the knowledge of scientists. He identified the need to put together a network of people to make practical recommendations for action that would take place in order to break the pattern of seeing the same people at meetings saying the same things over and over with usually no follow-up to meetings. In response, the forum chair Anderson Kinch remarked that fishers are often their own worst enemies since they do not communicate among themselves to make progress and take collective action. He stressed that fishers need to learn to work together ... starting from now.

In another contribution from Mexico the president of fishing cooperatives in Quintana Roo said that he had been to previous GCFI meetings and was happy to be at one again. Fishers need to use the word "sustainability" in their initiatives. He said fishers do not always have to wait for policy-makers to take decisions. Fishers need to use more of their own initiative to take action. Fishers in his area had tourism,

illegal fishing and hurricanes as enemies. Illegal fishing is a real problem but social and political decisions are made to avoid the social problems. This results in little enforcement despite measures such as the requirement to get permission to fish. Fishers have proposed establishing a closed season for groupers, minimum size limits and elimination of hooka or spears for lobster on a harmonised basis among nearby countries. They are aware that problems occur when fisheries measures are stronger in some countries compared to neighbours. Fishers in general needed to support decisions for stronger measures and enforcement. He too thanked his sponsors.

A research student described her experiences while obtaining valuable local knowledge from fishers. She challenged fishers to think about the problems that they face, and to clearly identify specific problems that need to be solved so as to develop their own research agendas for scientists and students to work on.

The question was posed as to how do scientists and managers ask fishers to harvest fewer fish and still expect them to make a living? Not enough attention is paid to suitable sustainable alternative livelihoods.

A fisher from St Croix, USVI, described how fishers addressed lobster “washing” (removal of eggs). They got buyers to raise the landed price of lobster to US\$8/lb to make fishing more profitable, and thus made fisher conservation more affordable. Fishers in the USVI are making their own conservation regulations, e.g. for conch which also involves price-raising. There is also a need to diversify fishing methods to try new species, and to give breaks (recovery periods) to fisheries in rotation. Fishers not waiting on action from government since fishers they perceive that they are not important to government. They are using collective action to make rules and regulations that work for them. For example, trammel nets are retired by attrition if a fisher dies. Fishers generally need to stop complaining of lack of government action and start to take action together.

Forum chairman Kinch agreed that several fisheries are under stress from several sources. Fishers must appreciate the need to diversify the use of marine resources beyond fishing. He recalled that in Belize MPAs such as at Hol Chan attract tourists to see fish and this non-consumptive use of fish is very valuable in terms of revenue generated.

One scientist who worked in the Florida Keys remarked that human population is increasing and there is not enough fish for everybody. Also, in some local communities it is difficult to enter fisheries these days. In many places, such as in the Mediterranean where entry into fishing is restricted to a few fisher families, priority is accorded to families with a fishing tradition. Where this system of tenure and tradition is practised, the inshore fisheries are in good condition. She also suggested that tourists can be encouraged not to eat resources that are under threat. She reminded participants that fishers have the power to regulate both themselves and others.

A fisher from Antigua and Barbuda noted that if fishers are being asked to harvest less, then there must be technical assistance to find alternative livelihoods. He described the example of fly-fishing in Belize being used as an alternative. He also said it was possible for fishers to cooperate more by having exchanges among themselves. Fishers, he asserted, also need to make changes in order to make money from tourism. He observed that politics always complicated fishing. Cooperatives needed to change attitudes in order to improve the perception and performance of the fishing industry.

Forum chairman Kinch recommended looking at marketing strategies for fishers to obtain more income from existing catches rather than having to catch more. This prompted a scientist to query whether there were middlemen in most fisheries, or were there mostly direct sales. She identified the need for dialogue on different marketing strategies in various fisheries, accepting the inappropriateness of generalising.

2.4 Lessons, networking, follow-up

Co-chair Mitchell Lay sought to solicit views on what participants wanted to recommend for GCFI or the CRFM FFO project coordinating unit to follow-up. He summarised points made by speakers as mainly:

- There being both a lack of fish and a lack of reasonable income for fishers
- Self regulation and involvement in co-management being prominent initiatives

- Impacts of natural disasters needing to be taken more into account by all
- Approaches to match fisher livelihood needs with sustainable resource use
- The process bringing scientists and fishers together needing to be improved

The fisher leader from Jamaica wanted to see members of GCFI get involved in CRFM and to get a better understanding of the latter. There was a linkage between GCFI and some fishers but this needed to be strengthened and expanded. He recommended developing stronger linkages between fisher folk in organisations in CRFM Member States and fishers in other Caribbean locations. He was keen to have a GCFI meeting held in Jamaica in the next few years.

The fisher from Guatemala reiterated the need to create an environmental programme on natural resources for fishers and to focus more on environmental education for fishers in the Gulf of Honduras area, linking scientists, fisher groups and NGOs. The fishers from Guatemala came to the meeting to represent their communities.

A scientist from Guatemala stressed the need to find a balance between biological and anthropological disciplines in fisheries. Scientists needed to communicate and cooperate more across disciplines.

Co-chair Mitchell Lay queried whether the forum had been useful and important to participants. He requested feedback on whether a fishers' forum should be a regular feature at GCFI.

A scientist from Mexico considered the forum important, but it was held too late for many people to participate. There is a need to have sessions such as these at future GCFI meetings; however some fishers were not clear as to what was expected from them at GCFI.

Co-chair Mitchell Lay saw the forum as a stepping stone for fishers to represent themselves in other arenas and to perhaps incorporate items into the GCFI programme. He thought that participants may also want to incorporate any future fisher forum into the main conference programme.

2.5 Closing remarks

Anderson Kinch, chairman of the forum, thanked contributors and others for having had the stamina to participate in the forum. He hoped that all had received some benefit from the forum and that there would be future similar structured opportunities for information exchange between fishers and scientists.

3. Review of week at GCFI

On Friday 9 November the core team met to review the entire week at GCFI. The team was joined by Kemraj Parsram, a CERMES PhD student, and Bisessar Chakalall, FAO Senior Fishery Officer. The conference programme was used as the agenda, with the fishers sharing observations and experiences. Their comments on each session are summarised below followed by more general thoughts on GCFI.

3.1 Opening ceremony

- The participation of high-ranking authorities demonstrated the meeting's high level of importance
- Poor time management due to delays and lengths of presentations affected the remainder of the day

3.2 GCFI retrospective

- This history was very enlightening for first time participants and regular participants alike
- Did not know before how important the organisation was and what was happening in other countries; one had to be there to hear it first hand; Jamaica should host a GCFI conference
- Good that information from previous proceedings was now available online for persons like fishers
- History of GCFI influenced fisher participation which dropped off when focus was mainly on science

3.3 Socio-economics and management

- This was a good session that should be appreciated by fishers
- No one but Kinch talked about global warming ... needs to be in GCFI next year
- Need to talk of impacts of population increase on food demand and production
- Showed stakeholder participation was really important to ensure people have better lives and resources are used sustainably
- Good to hear fishers giving presentations and many people complimented having fishers there
- Interest in this session carried over to the Fishers Forum on the next day
- Session was disadvantaged by time overrun of the opening ceremony
- Scientists had no time to answer the questions of fishers due to delay (no question time allowed)
- Wondered why it took so long for fishers to become a large part of the presentation agenda
- Interest of fishers in GCFI has recently increased since sessions are more diverse
- Important to know about ecosystem-based management and the direction that science and international management is heading in ... trends in science
- This year's questions and issues that were unanswered may carry over to next year's meeting

3.4 Grouper day

- Not aware of so much distinction among groupers and which of them were overfished
- Grouper catches in Jamaica increased recently after the last hurricane
- Interaction between large groupers and lobsters seen on the Pedro Bank
- Session provided new knowledge and most presentations were easy to follow
- Interesting, but presentations for fishers would be different ,, could be a mix of practice and science
- Many presentations suggested management measures but not monitoring and evaluation
- Presentations lacked suggestions for further practical research (especially on SPAGS); for example fishers said that the groupers had gone deeper, but the scientists did not address this
- Scientists did not address pollution affecting the grouper habitat as a reason for fish decrease
- Scientists ready to blame overfishing alone when there could be other causes of decline
- Need research on dynamics of aggregation and dispersal and to know the critical numbers of fish
- Fishers know that fish disappear from an area after a certain amount are caught
- Having the discussion panel after the presentations was good

3.5 Fishers forum

- Fishers forum was too late and people talked too fast for the personal interpreters to keep up
- Fishers forum should be reorganised and made more interactive next year
- Fishers forum should be a part of the agenda rather than held late after the day's sessions
- From 1981 there was attention to small-scale fishers, and the fishers at meetings had good camaraderie as many attended more fisheries development oriented sessions
- The large number of presentations will make it difficult to schedule the fishers forum
- Fishers may try to have their own meeting outside of GCFI to meet their needs
- Options exist such as how the seafood group having shared then a separate concurrent agenda
- Seafood session was very hands-on like the small-scale fisheries sessions of old
- Some people may come for the fisher session only and then leave; and this can be bad
- Fishers forum needs to be a mix of fishers and scientists to get knowledge exchange

3.6 Poster session

- Impressed by the level of content and presentation of the posters ... very informative
- Some thought more information was had from posters than talks if the authors were questioned

3.7 Spiny lobster

- Interesting and practical presentations
- Undersized lobsters were served at the dinner reception
- Larval distribution and transport was interesting in terms of currents and life cycle
- Good to hear about lobster management in different places to inform fishers
- Brazil's notion of putting lobsters on CITES was a very current issue of practical value
- Implications of US laws and CITES for lobster trade was important to know for enforcement

3.8 GCFI field trip

- Too many mosquitoes on the GCFI field trip and was very repetitive
- Needed more information on the natural history of the area
- Not much variety of wildlife in the forest

3.9 Pelagic and recreational fisheries

- Interesting and informative enough to give new ideas about fishing experimentation
- Opportunity to engage scientists about relationships between catches and moon phase
- Good information was received on the depth distribution of swordfish
- May change fishing methods based on the information received and experiment more
- Brought out importance of currents and ways of getting more scientific information on currents from satellite images available online
- Fishers questioned some of the information such as temperature distribution of fish habitat and chatted to scientists about impacts of temperature
- It was good to be sitting among scientists and talking to them about shared interests
- Did not get all questions answered, but collected cards to contact scientists afterwards
- Learned a lot about fish diet and encouraged now to experiment more with fishing methods
- Fishers cannot be chastised for using scientific knowledge to increase catches
- Information on wahoo diet (suggesting they are not cannibalistic) could be wrong as wahoo bait can be used for catching these fish, but one cannot use dolphinfish bait to catch dolphinfish
- Learning about research on fish eggs was interesting

3.10 Demersal (reef) fish

- Not of interest to some fishers not engaged in demersal fishing and many did not attend
- Will attend sessions from which information can be taken back to share with others
- This role of information sharing upon return is important for fisher leaders
- Very interesting for some fishers to learn about populations within the reef structure e.g. some large parrotfish were depleted in Antigua and this has implications for remaining species
- Need more information on the life history of demersals to better understand these fish
- Previous sessions in other years had more information on migration from tagging experiments
- Science cannot give answers for everything; some answers will come from fisher knowledge
- Fishers have many different observations and compare notes on what is present and what is depleted
- Some fish (e.g. "mossy grouper" in Barbados) were not fished heavily but the population still seems to have depleted
- Recalled in Jamaica that unexpected layer of shrimp showing on an echo sounder once made it seem as if a ship was running aground; there are many unexplained demersal phenomena
- Fish movements and migration are fascinating topics ...need to know more about these

3.11 Gladding Memorial Award

- Good to make fishers feel important and recognised
- These fishers could be role models for younger fishers
- Good to read history of Peter Gladding to know the man

3.12 Punta Cana fisher trip

- Fishers on the team did not attend the invertebrate (conch) and habitat sessions due to this trip
- After knowing the poor treatment of the Punta Cana fishers it was a bad feeling to see the opulence at the GCFI reception ... the field trip left some fishers feeling depressed at the plight of their brethren
- Do not care about locals but care about visitors ... local authorities are not helping
- Trip demonstrated the impacts of lacking leadership among fishers
- Local fishers are trying, but are not succeeding due to lack of support
- Not enough known was about background to properly analyse the situation, but lessons were learned about the need to form fisher groups to take collective action
- Barring this field trip there was no exposure to local conditions and poverty; the meeting was isolated
- In Guadeloupe there should be a field trip to interact with locals even to learn from them
- Fishers want to know what to do to assist the Punta Cana fishers...too much suffering
- Feedback was that the local fishers appreciated the visit by participants (21 people visited)
- Could be a role for the CRFM fisher folk coordinating unit to build linkages with the Dominican Republic e.g. to Peace Corps and Reef Check
- Assistance for Punta Cans fishers is all coming from outsiders
- No move by developers to integrate the fishing site into the tourism development as done elsewhere

3.13 Marine protected areas

- Very interesting topic for fishers to hear management, research, impacts
- Wanted to know more about factors that determine selection and design
- Not a clear demonstration of positive impacts of MPAs for fishing
- French island comparison of MPAs was informative
- Showed that scientists could make mistakes and be surprised by results
- Turtles are marine protected species ... as fishers turn to be conservationists
- At Oistins in Barbados fishers are now the protectors of turtles, and the same may be happening with MPAs as species recover
- Concern that too much protection can cause populations to increase and deplete other species
- Need to hear more about marine plants and animals that were there before MPAs
- US presentation showed large areas under protection in the Gulf... what is the reaction of fishers?
- Fishers see benefits of MPAs, especially multi-use areas
- Are MPAs necessary if fishers and others simply follow the normal regulations?
- Practical information obtained from MPA session relevant to new large area declared in Antigua

3.14 Spawning aggregations

- Fishers know to take into account the moon phase ... good to hear lunar knowledge from scientists
- Scientists rely on fishers for info on SPAGS; good relations can be generated around these
- Red hind is the main commercial species in Antigua and is targeted when spawning

3.15 General, social and other

- Sessions encourage fishers to want to seek more information on their own
- Less information is being shared (books, posters) at GCFI compared to previous years
- Good to collect posters being distributed at GCFI and put these in fisher folk meeting areas
- How will information gathered at GCFI be used on return? e.g. the modification of fishing gear, sharing with fellow fishers, putting up posters
- Some fishers back home do not want to hear and use information, but it is still good if only a few people hear and learn; need to share information with the local fisheries divisions and policy-makers
- Will GCFI experience cause fishers to demand more info from fisheries authority? "yes" for some
- Should not assume that fishers have internet access
- GCFI was relevant to doctoral research on networks
- Bad for fishers officers and CRFM officers to be absent since they lack the shared exposure

- Need to hear more about what our fisheries officers are researching and to share information
- Fisheries officers need to be present at GCFI along with fishers Need to attend meetings together most of the time ... fisheries officers go on courses that fishers should attend and do not share information afterwards
- Fishers can make interesting non-scientific presentations that are useful
- Most research presented at GCFI is not driven by the needs of fishers
- Need more fisher research agendas but fishers do not usually think this way
- Fishers can participate more in fisheries research and improve the quality of data
- Did fishers here make an impression on scientists? Yes, some impression was made as students came to talk to fishers as well as seasoned scientists
- For next GCFI there should be a mixed fisher session and those of the core team there will contribute.
- Kinch was already approached to do a paper with a scientist
- This report should be sent to the directors of GCFI
- Fisheries authorities need to play a greater role in planning GCFI
- Fishers will return to try to influence authorities to attend GCFI, but often they sit and listen and do not act since they react “who is he to say that?” ... the messengers are as critical as the messages
- Need to create incentives for fishers to attend GCFI (got to brag about the GCFI experience)
- For next yearshould the fishers forum be large and open, or small and closed? Pros and cons.
- Maybe should be both. Large open session to identify issues then discussed by smaller group later. Perhaps depends on the objective of the session (e.g. for fisher folk linking).
- May be good to get views of Spanish-speaking fishers from the fishers forum to include in the report
- Good to bring other fishers to GCFI particularly if they are dedicated to improving the fishing industry
- Need to have veteran participants along with new people
- Begin to raise funds soon for getting to Guadeloupe meeting
- Fishers willing to stay at cheaper hotels together, maybe fundraising for participation in 2008

4. Conclusions

Although CERMES and the CRFM Secretariat had previously assisted fisher participation in GCFI this was the first time that so many fishers were sponsored as a team. The ways in which they functioned as a team and the integration with ongoing fisher folk projects were very positive. The logistic challenges were few relative to the benefits in terms of meeting the stated objectives and spending the week at GCFI. It is clear that the fishers benefited from GCFI and we think that GCFI benefited as well.

The GCFI directors and 2008 programme committee should seriously consider means of attracting more fishers and fisheries officers to the meeting in Guadeloupe. It would present one of the few opportunities to exchange information across the three languages. This will require early planning and promotion. The fishers forum may be held in a format that facilitates more interaction on a small range of topics.

Funding agencies and fisheries-related project managers in the region should also see GCFI as an opportunity to have their project beneficiaries share information on their experiences first hand. Hearing directly from fishers was a very powerful means of communication at the Punta Cana meeting. Holding side meetings at, or after, GCFI is also a good way of building mutually beneficial value-added onto the meeting at minimal cost while sharing information widely.

Fisher folk groups also need to be more proactive in seeking out ways to participate in GCFI and similar meetings if they wish their perspectives to be known and they want to be setting agendas for research and development. It is hoped, due to the linkage with the CRFM FFO project, that at least this aspect of the future growth and development of fisher folk groups was enhanced through the time spent at GCFI.

In particular, feedback from the Punta Cana fishers who hosted the field trip has been as positive as from the visiting fishers in terms of being a worthwhile learning experience. A fisheries-oriented (rather than tourist or marine park oriented) field trip should be one of the options available to participants. CERMES and the CRFM Secretariat are interested in partnering with other agencies and the GCFI programme committee to organise fisher-related forums, field trips and other events at the 6¹st GCFI.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: GCFI programme

- Mon
 - Opening ceremony
 - A retrospective of Gulf and Caribbean fisheries: 57 years of contributions to the GCFI proceedings
 - Socio-economics and fisheries management
- Tue
 - GCFI business meeting
 - The status of goliath grouper: finding a common conservation and management solution through a regional scientific and fisheries framework
 - Special session on the Nassau grouper
 - Fishers' forum (organized by CERMES and CRFM)
 - Poster session – reception
- Wed
 - Responsible use of the Caribbean spiny lobster resource: integrating biology, management, marketing, processing, and trade
 - Field trip to Punta Cana ecological reserve
 - Pelagic and recreational fisheries biology
- Thu
 - Biology and fisheries of demersal and reef fishes
 - Biology and management of invertebrates
 - Essential habitat session
 - Fishers' field trip
- Fri
 - Science and management of marine protected areas
 - Biology and management of spawning aggregations

Appendix 2: Forum agenda

- 1800 Stay and register after the Nassau grouper session
- 1805 Welcome and introductions – Anderson Kinch, Chairman
- 1810 Fishers' forum aims and arrangements – Patrick McConney
- 1815 Linking and learning together – Anderson Kinch, Chairman
- 1820 Fisher folk organisation and fisheries science – Mitchell Lay
- 1830 Fishers' forum on fishing, science and management – Open
- 1930 Lessons learned and ideas for networking, follow-up – Open
- 2000 Closing remarks and farewell – Anderson Kinch, Chairman

Appendix 3: Forum participants

Participants who put their names on the forum registration sheet are listed below. About a dozen other people who were present did not register.

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	COUNTRY
Belen	Ezekial	Dominican Republic
Brathwaite	Everton	Barbados
Brown	Virdin	USA
Burgos	Bogart	Dominican Republic

Chaibongsai	Peter	United States
Chakalall	Bisessar	Barbados
Chavez	Ernesto A.	Mexico
Claro Madruga	Rodolfo	Cuba
Davy	Brian	Canada
Debrot	Denise	Venezuela
Fletcher	Pamela	USA
Franks	Jim	USA
Frias-Torres	Sarah	USA
Gatliff	Colleen	Dominican Republic
Gerhardinger	Leopoldo	Brazil
Gibson	Janet	Belize
Hawkins	Christopher	USA
Hendon	J. Read	USA
Hidalgo	Hugo	Guatemala
Hill	Ron	USA
Hobson	Winston	St. Kitts & Nevis
Honeyghan	Havelan	Jamaica
Iaroci	Tony	USA
Kinch	Anderson	Barbados
Kushner	Benjamin	Dominican Republic
Lay	Mitchell	Antigua
Locascio	James	USA
Luckhurst	Brian	Italy
Marshak	Anthony	Puerto Rico
McConney	Patrick	Barbados
McKinney	Casuarina	Bahamas
Medina Flores	Jaime	Mexico
Mendoza Arguez	Manuel	Mexico
Outerbridge	Linwood	Bermuda
Oxenford	Hazel	Barbados
Parsram	Kemraj	Barbados
Paz	Mito	Belize
Posada	Juan M	Venezuela
Reveles	Barbara	Mexico

Rodriguez	Luis Alfonso	México
Rodriguez Trinidad	Carlos	Dominican Republic
Salas	Silvia	Mexico
Samuel	Dalston	Antigua
Simmons	Norbert	Bermuda
Stone	Megan	USA
Torres	Ruben	Dominican Republic
Trott	Tammy	Bermuda
Vivas Muñoz	Jenny Carolina	Colombia

Appendix 4: Photographs

The following photographs were taken during the forum mainly by Kemraj Parsram and Kim Baldwin, two PhD students at CERMES whose participatory research involves considerable interaction with fishers.



Title of the fishers forum identifying the organisers



Chairman Kinch opened the fishers forum at GCFI



Kinch, Lay and McConney (R→ L) listening



Guatemala speaking with Mexico in the background



Punta Cana fishermen speaking through an interpreter



Dalston Samuels from Antigua spoke forcefully

Appendix 5: Forum presentations

Fisherfolk and fisheries scientists linking and learning together
FISHERS' FORUM AT GCFI

Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)



Draft agenda

Put your name and country on the sign-up sheet or leave your business card

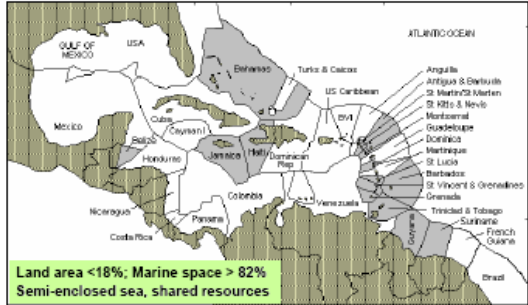
- 1805 Welcome and introductions
 - – Anderson Kinch, Chairman
- 1810 Fishers' forum aims and arrangements
 - – Patrick McConney
- 1815 Linking and learning together
 - – Anderson Kinch, Chairman
- 1820 Fisher folk organisation and fisheries science
 - – Mitchell Lay, Coordinating unit
- 1830 Fishers' forum on fishing, science, management
 - – Open discussion lead by fishers first
- 1930 Lessons learned, ideas for networking, follow-up
 - – Open discussion for recommendations
- 2000 Closing remarks and farewell
 - – Anderson Kinch, Chairman

Core team

- Terrence Phillips, CRFM Secretariat (not here)
- Patrick McConney, CERMES, UWI, Barbados
- Anderson Kinch, fishing industry, Barbados
- Everton Brathwaite, fishing industry, Barbados
- Mitchell Lay, fishing industry, Antigua
- Winston Hobson, fishing industry, Nevis
- Havelan Honeyghan, fishing industry, Jamaica
- Brian Davy, IISD, Canada

Caribbean hypothetical EEZs

shaded areas are Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member States



Land area <18%; Marine space > 82%
Semi-enclosed sea, shared resources

Fishers' forum aims and arrangements



Project context

- Project on *Development of Caribbean Network of Fisher Folk Organizations*
- September 2006 to July 2008
- Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat in partnership with the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation (CTA)
- Member States of the CRFM

Project objective and purpose

- Overall objective:
 - To contribute to improved income earnings, higher standards of living of fisher folk and sustainable use of fishery resources in the Caribbean
- Specific purpose:
 - Institutional capacities of fisher folk organizations developed at the regional, national and community levels.

Purpose of Fishers' Forum

- To provide a scheduled opportunity for the fishers at 60th GCFI to share information on fishing, science and management amongst themselves and with people involved in applied participatory fisheries research
- History of fishing industry at GCFI
- Gladding Memorial Award at GCFI

Expected outputs, outcomes

- Include stronger networking and practical ideas for building upon or fixing the interactions mainly between the fishing industry and researchers
 - Report of Fishers' Forum to be widely distributed
- Fishing industry participants share knowledge and experiences with others in the Caribbean via CRFM
 - Slide show, etc. of fishers' experiences, views

Linking and learning together

Anderson Kinch, GCFI Board of Directors



Reaching out

- Fishermen and scientists need to work together ... now
- No longer **who** is right, but **what** is right
- Scientists have responsibility to reach out to fisher folk and public in general
- Fishermen may see more situation-specific variation than a scientist who looks for findings to apply generally

Exchanging information

- Scientists and managers made decisions that had direct impacts on the livelihoods of the fishermen without their involvement
- Fishermen usually do not know how information obtained from them is used
- Researchers need to explain to fishers the outputs and outcomes of their research
- Fisheries communication needs improving

Important role of GCFI members

- GCFI has wealth of knowledge and skills
- GCFI can play pivotal role in collaboration among scientists, managers and fishers
- Need to combine science (research) and experience (practice) to manage effectively
- Form sub-committees to look at special projects, workshops, linking fisher folk organizations, participatory research

Practical follow-up action

- Fisheries scientists and fishermen working more together on applied fisheries research
- Train fishermen in data collection and have them present when information is analyzed
- Focus more on fisheries-related education
- Invest in networking fisher folk regionally
- Have Fishers' Forum as regular GCFI event

Together we aspire ... together we achieve

Fisher folk organisation and fisheries science:

Fishers, managers, scientists
Mitchell Lay, Chairman, Coordinating Unit
CRFM Fisher Folk Development Project



Fisherfolk Organizations

- Training, lobby (advocacy), publicity
- Policy and management
- Support and safety
- Economics

Caribbean Fisher Organizations

Reasons to form

- Respond to Issues
- Economics
- Support/safety
- Activity oriented

Current real issues

- Advocacy/Policy
- Management
- Sustainable practices
- Education/Training

CARICOM fisheries management

CRFM structure and functions

- Ministerial Council
 - – Policy and decisions
- Caribbean Fisheries Forum
 - – Informs and advises
 - – Absence of fisherfolk as full members
- CRFM Secretariat
 - – Management, scientific, and secretarial

Considerations

- Good governance – participatory
- Fisheries in crisis – code of conduct
- Conservation and biodiversity – precautionary approach
- Stakeholder participation at all levels
- Regional / national food security
- Improve livelihoods
- Sustainability
- Economic stability

CRFM – fisherfolk

CTA Project – Form regional fisherfolk network

- Capacity building
- Strengthen primary and national bodies
- Support development of national body
- Facilitate formation of regional body
- Coordinating unit formed in September 2007 to establish regional fisherfolk organisation

Managers, scientists and fishers linking together

Infonet:

- Managers – Policy and enforcement
- Scientists – Knowledge for training and research
- Fishers – Knowledge for experience and observation

Inclusive management:

- Understand issues – contribution
- Sustainable fisheries
- Improved livelihoods
- Food security – better economies

Topics suggested for discussion

- Data poor assessment
- Observer programs
- Reef fish SPAGS and their protection
- Technical and economic links of fishing operations to management plans
- Getting information to decision makers
- How to sustain lobster and other fisheries
- Traditional knowledge
- Co-management
- Alternative income sources
- Relationship of tides and sun/moon to fish behavior
- Day fishing for swordfish.
- Bottom habitat, upwelling, bait / fish concentrations
- Dolphinfish reproduction
- Parasites in dolphinfish, tuna
- Dolphinfish, wahoo and tuna life cycles
- North-south distribution of ciguatera
- Poverty and literacy levels in fishing communities
- Developing capacity in fisher groups