

## **Fishers Forum: Climate Change and Small-scale Fisheries in the Caribbean**

The Fishers Forum was designed in part to fulfil an aim of a small International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) funded research project that was implemented by the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Cave Hill Campus in Barbados. This aim was to: “Provide participants, and especially fishers, at the 61<sup>st</sup> GCFI meeting in November 2008 with information on the impacts of climate change on small-scale fisheries in the eastern Caribbean in such a way as to stimulate follow-up research and action”. To accomplish this, after opening remarks by Forum chair Anderson Kinch, paper presentations were made by Philmore James and Leonard Nurse of CERMES on the topics *Incorporating Climate Change Projections into Caribbean Fisheries Management* and *An Assessment of Potential Impacts of Climate Change and Climate Variability on Small-scale Fisheries in the Eastern Caribbean*. Mitchell Lay led the discussion that followed.

Participants remarked on the importance of addressing climate change in small-scale fisheries from science, management, policy and practical livelihoods perspectives. They discussed the quality and availability of data, and the importance of fishers’ observations. The meeting was reminded that although climate change was an emerging area of interest it should not be used as an excuse to neglect research and management interventions that had already proven vital to fisheries management. There was the danger of having fisheries management resources diverted away from the fundamental activities required for sustainable fisheries unless climate change research was put in the context of ongoing and planned initiatives or at least coordinated with these. Fisheries authorities were called upon to be more aware of, and involved in, climate change initiatives. The role of GCFI in promoting regional information exchange on the topic was highlighted.

The Fishers Field Trip to the nearby fish landing sites of St. Felix harbour and Petit Havre was organized and sponsored by the Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Elevages Marins de Guadeloupe. It attracted over 30 scientists and fishers who discussed a wide range of fisheries issues with local fishers. Other main sponsors of the Forum and Field Trip were the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) of Canada along with regional private sector sponsors Sol and Island Heritage Insurers. The full report (CERMES 2009) is available as a download from the GCFI and CERMES web sites.

### **REFERENCE**

CERMES. 2009. Report of the Fishers Forum: “Climate change and small-scale fisheries in the Caribbean” at the 61<sup>st</sup> Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Gosier, Guadeloupe 10-14 November 2008. CERMES MarGov Project Document 12. Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies, Barbados. 19 pp.