

## **OPENING SESSION**

Chairman — William B. Hannum, Jr.  
*National Marine Fisheries Service,  
Washington, D.C.*

### **Towards a Partnership for Fisheries Development**

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#### **RESUMEN**

Reconoce la importancia y papel histórico del Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute suministrando lazos de comunicación para el desarrollo pesquero. Destaca los principios de la primera política del desarrollo pesquero de los Estados Unidos. Afirma los elementos principales del programa de desarrollo pesquero de la NOAA/NMFS el cual estará enfocado sobre especies no-tradicionales y esfuerzos de desarrollo regional. Confirma la disponibilidad de fondos para implementar programas de desarrollo comprensivo regional. Solicita esfuerzos cooperativos para obtener el crecimiento pesquero del Golfo, del Caribe y sus áreas adyacentes a su potencial máximo.

I am pleased to be here today and have an opportunity to make the opening address at the 32nd Annual Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute. Although I am a relative newcomer to the fisheries world, I am already aware that the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute offers a unique avenue for communication among the various groups involved with fishery resources in the southeastern United States, the Gulf of Mexico and the countries in the Caribbean. We can all applaud the wisdom of those who formed the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute in 1948. Among the founders were fisheries scientists, administrators, and members of industry. They recognized that progress in dealing with fisheries matters ultimately depends upon communications and information exchange. Over the years, the Institute's meetings and publications have continued to serve basic communication needs concerning fisheries research, conservation, management, and development, including marketing and trade, which are among the topics on our agenda this morning.

I would like to use this opportunity this morning to discuss with you the Administration's new policy for developing and strengthening the fishing industry, a policy which was announced last May at a national conference in northern Virginia. This was the first time in recent history that a comprehensive federal program and action plan had been put together to address, all at the same time, the many different problems which stand in the way of full and rapid development of fishery resources within United States' waters. The program is to be designed and implemented on a regional basis, and although federal financial support is available, industry leadership is the essential requirement for identifying regional priorities and establishing, in each region, an aggressive and positive plan of action for accelerating fisheries development.

I am pleased to announce today, that the National Marine Fisheries Service will publish in the *Federal Register* this week, an announcement of the availability of approximately \$10 million to be spent in fiscal year 1980 to implement this fisheries development program, the first ever to be guided by a national policy. In the next few minutes, I would like to outline for you the principles underlying the Administration's new fishery development policy, discuss the mechanisms by which it will be carried out and touch on some of the ways in which this program should provide benefits to the fishing industry in the Gulf, the Southeast and the Caribbean. I believe that my remarks will touch on many opportunities and problems you will recognize.

#### PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE ADMINISTRATION'S FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT POLICY

President Carter approved six principles in formalizing a national policy to facilitate the utilization and development of United States' fishery resources.

*First:* the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 was reaffirmed as the legislative mandate which can assure a continuing yield from our fishery conservation zone.

*Second:* in carrying out our fishery development program, the Department of Commerce, and particularly the National Marine Fisheries Service, were instructed to form an active and innovative partnership with the fishing industry, state and local governments, the academic and research community, and other nations which have interests in our fishery resources. This should be a cooperative effort which will lead to strengthening the economics of both the United States and its most important trading partners, many of whom are represented here today.

*Third:* there is a legitimate and positive role for the expenditure of federal funds on behalf of fisheries development activities. In this regard we have prepared a legislative proposal which is now going through Executive Branch clearance, which would clarify the federal government's role and responsibilities in this vital area. Also, as I mentioned a moment ago, we are prepared to make funds available to support a wide range of activities in developing U.S. fisheries.

*Fourth:* fishery development activities must be well coordinated, regionally, and among the different participants — federal, state, local and

private — to ensure that efficient utilization of existing programs takes place and that new initiatives which develop are responsive to the people we serve and the partnerships we form between industry and government.

*Fifth:* we are committed to reduce the burden of unnecessary regulations which impact on the fishing and seafood industries. In this regard, we are prepared to support research and analysis of the impact of regulations, including those promulgated by EPA, OSHA, state governments, and others, to ascertain whether the burden of those regulations on the private sector exceeds the public benefits which might accrue. We must ensure that regulatory bodies are aware of sensitive economic, environmental, and public health issues when making decisions affecting our fisheries, fishing industry, and the general public.

*Finally:* the sixth principle of the new U.S. fishery development policy is directly related to a main topic of this 32nd Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute meeting. It recognizes that there are tremendous opportunities to improve international trade in fisheries products. Progress in this area has already been made but many problems concerning the expansion of exports of fisheries products from the Southeast and the Caribbean remain unresolved. To this end, the Administration will continue to encourage and support trade discussions between governments and between industry here and abroad. By definition, these efforts will involve joint activities and cooperation between the federal government and the private sector.

These basic principles of the Administration's policy in fisheries development were designed to stimulate investment by the private sector for the expansion of the U.S. fishery industry. The NOAA/NMFS fisheries development program will be focused on non-traditional species and on facilitating regional development efforts. Projects will be aimed at (1) providing basic information necessary for development, and (2) removing or minimizing specific impediments. Simply stated, the objective is to reduce the risk undertaken by the private sector and facilitate industry expansion and trade.

The beneficiaries of development will include not only fishermen and vessel owners, but also fish processors, and secondary equipment and vessel suppliers. In addition, the growth of the fisheries harvesting, processing and marketing network will involve investment in many coastal, economically-distressed areas, and will help mitigate the effect of seasonal employment by creating additional offseason fisheries. As a result of greater utilization of vessels, and investment in newer and more efficient equipment, American consumers should benefit from more stable prices as well as improved nutrition through the availability of greater quantities of fish.

### IMPLEMENTING THE FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The Fisheries Development Program is an integral element in the national effort to achieve the basic fisheries goals of conservation, management and development of the nation's fisheries resources. The nature of the fisheries development process requires that specific objectives be pursued both at a national level and within defined geographical regions. Moreover, program

implementation requires active participation by the local fishing industry, state and local government and several federal agencies to achieve program objectives. This will be achieved through program mechanisms located both in regional areas and at agency headquarters, and by the involvement of individuals who will identify specific objectives and means to overcome impediments to development that have been broadly classified.

There are a number of program management roles we expect to play at the national level, in my office in Washington, D.C., that I would like to highlight. If we are effective in our role, we can aid the regional development process in several respects. Specifically our role will be to provide national criteria and priorities as to areas of investigation, to control funding of projects, to monitor the progress of the national effort, to assess beneficial results and to help fight the many budget and program battles which must be done at the national level.

For example, we have set up effective working relationships with the many agencies within the Department of Commerce which are essential to carrying out the fisheries development goals mentioned above. Effective communication and planning relationships have been established with the Bureau of Export Development, with the Maritime Administration, with the Economic Development Administration, particularly in the Regional Offices and with Secretarial representatives in a number of the key cities where fisheries development activities are taking place. Within NOAA, contacts have been made with the Sea Grant Program to determine how Sea Grant Universities can relate most effectively to fisheries development research and demonstration needs.

Working relationships are being set up with consumer organizations concerned about the public health issue surrounding the safety of certain fisheries from a public health standpoint. In this respect, Terry Leitzell, myself and members of my staff recently met with the then Acting Commissioner of FDA to discuss our mutual concerns regarding these problems. It was strongly felt that the development of research information necessary to properly deal with problems of seafood safety is lagging well behind that needed now and in the future. Further, it was recognized that in order to address better these problems, the two agencies needed to coordinate the planning and conduct of much of their seafood research — not only that dealing with safety, but in other areas as well — such as nutrition, quality and labeling. Consequently, we are presently preparing a formal Memorandum of Understanding to that effect.

This, coupled with the NMFS Fisheries Development Program, will permit us to address better a number of problems or impediments to the development and utilization of fisheries, including those of the Caribbean and Gulf. For example, you are well aware that ciguatera poisoning is the single most outstanding deterrent to the development of reef fisheries in the Caribbean. Further, since a number of other Gulf species can become ciguatoxic, industry is rightly concerned about the "scare" response that this toxin poses — beyond actual public health considerations — which could adversely affect the sale of Gulf fishery products.

NMFS and FDA recently sponsored a workshop on marine toxins (ciguatera, paralytic shellfish poisoning, puffer fish poisoning) with a number of scientific experts on these subjects. The status of current research was described and future needs were identified. It was agreed that the problem of ciguatera in fisheries of the Caribbean and Hawaii presented the most immediate public health concern, and that the present level of federal research needed to be significantly expanded. It is my intent to ensure that such an expansion will begin this year through special research projects funded with NMFS monies and supplemented with FDA-sponsored work. In addition, we will be expanding our research on the levels and significance of petroleum hydrocarbons in fishery products. Another safety-related project now underway is to demonstrate the safety of partially hydrogenated menhaden oil for human consumption. The results of this 2-year study will be used to support a petition to FDA to permit the use of menhaden oil as a direct food additive in the U.S., providing a broader market for this product.

In short, the NMFS Office of Utilization and Development will manage national projects in fisheries development activities, such as these on seafood products' safety, in support of comprehensive regional programs. These national projects will involve activities which extend beyond regional boundaries and which provide a framework for regional efforts.

The major NMFS effort to participate with the private sector and local government groups for support of fisheries development will be provided by the NMFS regional office and center staffs, however. These people have the detailed knowledge, experience and contacts which are essential to formulating and maintaining an effective partnership between the federal government and those who are actively participating in fisheries development activities at the local level.

In this regard, I would like to say a word about regional fisheries development foundations. Regional diversity in fishery resources, stages of development, and institutional arrangements is reflected in the approach and level of local fishery development activity. Organizations representing industry-initiated, non-profit, self-help entities have been set up to engage in fisheries development in each region. It is our express desire and hope that an effective regional partnership arrangement involving the foundations, the federal government, states, academia, fishery management councils and others having a stake in fishery development will evolve in each region of the United States. We are greatly encouraged and even impressed by the progress to date in the Southeast region. Meetings such as this which bring together a variety of interests and viewpoints can only be beneficial to the cooperative process we see demonstrated throughout our travels in this area.

In this view, I am extremely pleased to be part of the same program as Roger Anderson, the Executive Director of the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Development Foundation. Roger and his Foundation have, in just a short period of time, shown all of us what is meant by the phrase "an effective partnership between industry and government for regional fisheries development."

## FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT AND THE CARIBBEAN

Recognizing that the expansion of our domestic fishing industry in the Gulf and Caribbean areas would have important national, international and regional benefits, NMFS participation in the Caribbean has been stepped up since 1976 as a result of several activities. These are our participation in the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council; the assignment of Harvey Bullis to coordinate our research efforts with Western Central Atlantic countries in 1977; his replacement by Rolf Juhl in 1979; and the development of a broad program proposal for fisheries research and development in the Caribbean. This proposal is now being considered in the normal budget process for FY 1982.

One aspect of the above proposal which is creating a lot of interest is conch aquaculture. Rolf Juhl will cover the technical aspects of this in his talk, but you should be aware of the interest. Puerto Rico, for example, is currently considering a reprogramming of PL 88-309 funds into this area, and the SEFC has committed FY 80 funds for a conch aquaculture feasibility study which will look at both hatchery operations for seeding natural growing areas and the production of conch meat through more conventional grow-out systems.

The recent study by Earl Combs, Inc., identifying major world and U.S. markets for fishery products might be useful to some Caribbean nations anticipating fishery product exports. I am sure you recognize that most Caribbean countries are net importers of fishery products, while most exports consist of high value products such as shrimp and lobster.

Although of importance only to the American Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Development Foundation recently sponsored a technology transfer program from the Florida Keys fishery to island fishermen. NMFS has also been active in making Section 10 of the Fishermen's Protective Act available to fishermen damaged by Hurricane David. Staff members from the Southeast region and my office have been traveling back and forth to Puerto Rico all Fall to assist in expediting the payment of these claims and to minimize the economic hardships to the fishermen injured by this terrible hurricane.

While time does not permit a review of the many facets of fisheries development in this area, I hope that some of your more important concerns will be brought forth during our discussion period.

### CONCLUSION

Our overall assessment indicates that the future for fisheries development looks good. Worldwide, demand for fishery products is increasing rapidly. The Food and Agriculture Organization predicts that, over the next decade, world demand for fish will increase by more than one-third. This means that by 1990 world demand will have increased by more than 20 million metric tons.

In the United States, the demand for fishery products is strong and growing. In 1978, \$11 billion were spent in the U.S. on edible seafoods.

The future is obviously bright, but as a newcomer to the field of fisheries, I am tempering my optimism with a healthy respect for the time and effort it will take to bring about changes. As the national manager of this effort, I will strive to provide an encouraging environment to maximize opportunities for fisheries development. Achievement of the goal of bringing the fisheries products to their full potential will depend on the leadership in the private sector and in the many nations represented here today. Let us mark this 32nd meeting of the Institute as the beginning of an era of substantial new efforts by all to achieve that goal.