

# **Fisherfolk Organisations Influencing Policy and Building Capacity in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**

## **Organizaciones de Pescadores que Influyen en la Política y Creación de Capacidad en la Comunidad del Caribe (CARICOM)**

## **Organisations de Pêcheurs Influencer la Politique et de Renforcement des Capacités dans la Communauté des Caraïbes (CARICOM)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the Caribbean Community, regional and national fisheries-related programmes and projects seek to promote an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF). This calls for a bottom-up approach to policy influencing and execution. Through experience, the limitations on fisherfolk organisations (FFOs) to participate in these processes have become more obvious. According to the literature, there are three types of policy influencing activity: evidence and advice, public campaigns and advocacy, and lobbying and negotiation. As such, FFOs need to develop adequate capacity (world view, organisational culture, structures, skills and knowledge, financial and physical resources, relationships, and adaptive capacity) in these three areas if they are to effectively make use of the opportunities for policy influence at the national, regional and global levels. This paper looks at the issues facing FFOs in the Caribbean Community, such as inadequate internal governance, ineffective leadership, insufficient participatory planning and mobilisation of members, and their impacts on the FFOs' ability to influence policy. It assesses the dilemma that FFOs face in that many of the fisheries and related policies on food security (e.g. Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines, Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy) speak to addressing their issues, but require negotiation and advocacy for the policies to be properly resourced and implemented. It examines the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) and the role it can play in addressing the issues identified through effective leadership, planning, resource mobilisation, capacity building, and policy influencing.

KEY WORDS: Policy influence, governance, capacity building, fisherfolk organisations, Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations

### **INTRODUCTION**

In 2013, the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)/Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) undertook to strengthen their commitment to and implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) through fisheries policies, plans, and management arrangements at regional, national, and local levels (CRFM 2013). This calls for a bottom-up approach to policy influencing and execution. It also highlights the need to interact and address conflicts with stakeholders in other sectors such as tourism and energy (e.g. oil and gas). As regional and national fisheries and related programmes and projects seek to promote an ecosystem approach to fisheries, the limitations on fisherfolk organisations (FFOs) to participate in these processes have become more obvious.

According to Jones (2011), there are three types of policy influencing activity: evidence and advice, public campaigns and advocacy, and lobbying and negotiation. As such, FFOs need to develop adequate capacity in these areas if they are to effectively make use of the opportunities for policy influence at the national, regional, and global levels. Capacity is defined as world view, organisational culture, structures, skills and knowledge, financial and physical resources, relationships, and adaptive capacity (CANARI 2011).

### **METHODOLOGY**

This paper is largely based on observations made during the author's involvement in the co-facilitation of four out of seven national fisherfolk workshops which were held for fisherfolk leaders and key public sector agencies (e.g. Fisheries Authorities and Cooperative Departments) in Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada. It also draws from the reports of similar national fisherfolk workshops that were held in Barbados, Dominica, and Suriname in which he did not participate. Context is provided by a literature review of relevant global and regional fisheries and food and nutrition security policies conducted in preparation for the workshops.

The objectives of the workshops were:

- i) To identify challenges to fisherfolk in playing an effective role in fisheries governance and management,
- ii) To identify priorities for strengthening fisherfolk organisations, and
- iii) To identify opportunities for fisherfolk to address some of the challenges by getting involved in key national, regional, and global policy and decision-making processes.

These workshops were held under the *Strengthening Fisherfolk to Participate in Governance project* which is aimed at building the capacity of the CNFO and its member national fisherfolk organisations in the CARICOM region to better participate in fisheries governance and management at the local, national and regional levels in order to enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security. In addition, the paper takes into consideration a recent review of the performance of the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations in achieving its mission (Phillips and Nembhard 2014).

### FISHERS AND FISHERFOLK ORGANISATIONS - ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

At the recently concluded National Fisherfolk Workshops for Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname, which were held under the EU funded *Strengthening Fisherfolk to Participate in Governance Project*, fisherfolk leaders identified significant issues and their underlying/ root causes which were impacting their development. Some of these are identified in Table 1.

**Table 1.** National Fisherfolk Workshops - Problem analysis

Problem areas	Underlying/Root causes	Likely interventions
Fisherfolk organisations - governance, leadership management,	lack transparency and accountability inadequate reporting inadequate leadership insufficient adherence to the by-laws lack of/inadequate internal supervision inadequate oversight by regulatory agencies	implement constitutions/by-laws build capacity in relation to skills required Improve oversight by regulatory agencies develop criteria and certification for leadership put in place mechanism for succession planning review national policies and legislation for cooperatives
Membership	negative history on cooperatives insufficient awareness of the role of cooperatives insufficient awareness of by-laws/ constitution	build awareness of the role of cooperatives build awareness about the constitution/by-laws
Financial sustainability/ resource mobilisation	inadequate systems for cost recovery/inadequate fee structures for goods and services poorly managed business operations ineffective partnerships	develop/improve partnerships improve on costing of goods and services build capacity in financial management
Cost of operations	inappropriate technology insufficient access to information cost of fuel less (marketable fish) insufficient access to major markets e.g. in the tourism sector inequity in the value chain	acquire innovative technology and physical resources change "culture" regarding the pricing of fish and fish products control the price of fuel promote equity in the value chain add value to fish caught build capacity at the cooperative department in to assist fishers build capacities in business planning and communication promote fishing as a business build capacity in financial management and how to access financial resources
Marketing	insufficient access to markets inadequate quality assurance systems lack of/inadequate access to market intelligence inadequate onshore infrastructure	develop suitable training programmes provide good offshore/onshore infrastructure improve access to market intelligence
Onshore infrastructure	insufficient onshore infrastructure inadequate policies insufficient investment inadequate management inadequate involvement of stakeholders in the boards of fisheries complexes	improve policy and approaches to management of the complexes and marketing put in place adequate mechanisms for consultation with stakeholders develop mechanism for financial management promote good business planning build capacities in management
Social security	lack of awareness insufficient outreach by social security bodies attitude	create awareness about social security issues in SSF conduct more consistent outreach e.g. national insurance agencies
Youth in fisheries	insufficient awareness of career opportunities in the fisheries sector	build capacity about fisheries in teacher training add fisheries to school curriculum

Table 1 (continued).

Problem areas	Underlying/Root causes	Likely interventions
Conflict management e.g. tourism	inadequate awareness of regulations inadequate intersectoral planning inadequate participation of stakeholders on intersectoral bodies	improve collaboration and coordination among the sectors build capacity in conflict management improve inter-sectoral planning create awareness in the tourism sector
Importance of fisheries/status	lack of information on the contribution of fisheries to national and community development	collaborate in data collection and management improve reporting on the performance of the fisheries sector promote career opportunities in the fisheries sector
Fisheries policy	lack of/inadequate fisheries policies inadequate mechanisms for participation of stakeholders	improve collaboration between Government and stakeholders. build data capacity for the development of policy build advocacy capacity of fisherfolk to hold the Government accountable for delays in approving policy
Fisheries management	lack of/inadequate management planning and fisheries plans inadequate mechanisms for consultations	approve fisheries management plans build data capacity for management of fisheries build advocacy capacity of fisherfolk to hold the Government accountable for delays in approving fisheries management plans
Praedial larceny	inadequate MCS disconnect between the law enforcement and judicial systems	promote collaboration amongst agencies build enforcement capacities develop awareness programs
IUU fishing	lack of/inadequate enforcement of fisheries regulations insufficient awareness about regulations inadequate enforcement capacity	build capacity to do monitoring, control and surveillance build communication capacity
Environmental protection	insufficient awareness of the importance of the environment inadequate intersectoral planning	improve intersectoral planning undertake valuation of the environment (goods and services) promote EBM/EAF build capacity in EBM/EAF

Source: Barbados NFW report (Blackman & Simmons 2014), Dominica, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname Draft NFWs. (CANARI, in press)

A review of some of the goals, objectives and other articles of global and regional fisheries and related policy instruments on food and nutrition security which are being developed and/or implemented in Table 2, show that they are aimed at addressing many of the issues faced by fishers, their organisations and communities, including the participation of fisherfolk in policy influencing.

In many instances while these policies have been approved at the global and regional levels, they are yet to be reflected in national fisheries and related food and nutrition security policies.

Many of the issues identified by the fishers at the national and local levels can be addressed by way of clearly defined and approved fisheries policies and management plans, with adequate resources being mobilised for implementation. However, in many countries, national fisheries policies and management plans, are outdated, or, even

though developed, are still in draft form. There is a tendency to address issues in an *ad hoc* or piecemeal manner without any clearly articulated policy orientation. As such, the solutions tend to be short term and may not be making the best use of the limited resources available.

The dilemma that fishers and their organisations face is that many of the fisheries and related policies and plans on food and nutrition security that are being developed speak to addressing their issues, but they need to be in place. This would require lobbying and advocacy for the policies to be properly taken onboard, resourced and implemented at the national and local levels. Strong and effective fisherfolk organisations would be required to play such a role. In order to do this, fisherfolk organisations will have to pay more attention to their internal governance arrangements to provide effective leadership, mobilise their membership, and develop the capacities required for policy influence.

**Table 2.** Examples of global and regional fisheries and related policies on food and nutrition

Policy Instrument	Vision/Goal/Objective/Other
<b>Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines</b> (FAO 2012a.)	<p><b>Objective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to enhance the contribution of small-scale fisheries to global food security and nutrition and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food,</li> <li>• to contribute to the equitable development of small-scale fishing communities and poverty eradication and to improve the socio-economic situation of fishers and fish workers within the context of sustainable fisheries management,</li> <li>• to achieve the sustainable utilization, prudent and responsible management and conservation of fisheries resources consistent with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code) and related instruments</li> <li>• to promote the contribution of small-scale fisheries to an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for the planet and its people,</li> <li>• to provide guidance that could be considered by States and stakeholders for the development and implementation of ecosystem friendly and participatory policies, strategies and legal frameworks for the enhancement of responsible and sustainable small-scale fisheries, and</li> <li>• to enhance public awareness and promote the advancement of knowledge on the culture, role, contribution and potential of small-scale fisheries, considering ancestral and traditional knowledge, and related constraints and opportunities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Approach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to be achieved through the promotion of a human rights-based approach, by empowering small-scale fishing communities, including both men and women, to participate in decision-making processes, and to assume responsibilities for sustainable use of fishery resources, and placing emphasis on the needs of developing countries and for the benefit of vulnerable and marginalized groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure</b> (FAO, 2012b.)	<p><b>Goal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to achieve food security for all and support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.</li> <li>• contribute to achieving sustainable livelihoods, social stability, housing security, rural development, environmental protection, and sustainable social and economic development.</li> <li>• There is an emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized people.</li> </ul>
<b>Right to Food Guidelines (FAO)</b> (FAO, 2005)	<p><b>Objective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to provide practical guidance to states in their implementation of the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, in order to achieve the goals of the World Food Summit Plan of Action.</li> <li>• They provide an additional instrument to combat hunger and poverty and to accelerate attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.</li> </ul>
<b>CLME+ Strategic Action Programme</b> (CLME 2013)	<p><b>Vision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a healthy marine environment in the CLME+ that provides benefits and livelihoods for the well-being of the people of the region</li> </ul>
<b>Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP)</b> (CRFM 2011)	<p><b>Goal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to establish, within the context of the Revised Treaty, appropriate measures for: the conservation, management, sustainable utilisation and development of fisheries resources and related ecosystems; the building of capacity amongst fishers and the optimisation of the social and economic returns from their fisheries; and the promotion of competitive trade and stable market conditions, so as to realise the vision.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to promote the sustainable development of fishing and aquaculture industries in the Caribbean region as a means of, <i>inter alia</i>, increasing trade and export earnings, protecting food and nutrition security, assuring supply to Caribbean markets and improving income and employment opportunities</li> <li>• improve the welfare and livelihoods of fishers and fishing communities</li> <li>• prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including by promoting the establishment and maintenance of effective monitoring, control, and surveillance systems</li> <li>• integrate environmental, coastal and marine management considerations into fisheries policy so as to safeguard fisheries and associated ecosystems from anthropogenic threats and to mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural disasters</li> <li>• transform the fisheries sector towards being market-oriented, internationally- competitive and environmentally-sustainable, based on the highest international standards of quality assurance and sanitary and phytosanitary systems</li> <li>• facilitate the establishment of a regime for SPS for the fisheries sector.</li> <li>• The policy addresses the need to build capacity amongst fishers and optimise the social and economic returns from the fisheries, which is a common thread throughout Caribbean societies.</li> <li>• It considers the rights of traditional, subsistence, artisanal and small-scale fishers.</li> <li>• It calls for more empowerment for fishers, ensuring their involvement in decision making.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Food and nutrition security policy (CARICOM)</b> (CARICOM 2010)	<p><b>Goal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to provide a clearly articulated, holistic policy framework that translates the major orientations and elements of the overarching and underexploited regional development agreements and initiatives into concrete policy priorities that will guide the design, implementation and monitoring of specific future periodic strategic action programmes to address the major food and nutrition security challenges in CARICOM.</li> <li>• Provides a coherent, convergent and comprehensive framework within which national governments, civil society and private sector actors can join forces with regional organisations and development partners in cross-national, multi-sector and synergistic partnerships to identify, finance, implement and monitor an integrated set of concrete actions to achieve the four objectives of a) food availability; b) food access; c) proper food utilisation for good health, nutrition and wellbeing; and d) stable and sustainable food supplies at all times.</li> </ul>

## CARIBBEAN NETWORK OF FISHERFOLK ORGANISATIONS

In keeping with its vision and mission, the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO), which was formed during the period 2006 to 2009, has been involved in policy influence at the national, regional and global levels since 2009. Through networking and partnerships, the CNFO has been fairly effective in collaborative planning, mobilising resources for capacity building, information exchange and policy influence. Two of its major achievements have been the mobilisation of resources for capacity building under the:

(i) *Strengthening Fisherfolk to Participate in Governance project*, and

(ii) *Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas Network (ECMMAN) project* which is aimed at improving fisheries and conserving and restoring marine resources, while providing for sustainable job opportunities (Phillips and Nembhard 2014).

Both projects will end by 2017, with much more work being required to improve the internal governance arrangements and build capacity of the FFOs involved. For the CNFO to establish itself as a viable network to serve its membership, it will have to overcome its reluctance and/or inadequate capacity to plan, and review and complete the strategic and action plan upon which it embarked in 2009. Based on its strategy and action plan, it could seek to articulate for a more programmatic approach from its development partners. Depending on its capacity requirements and the interests of its partners, the CNFO will have to use its broadening influence to build new partnerships to mobilise additional resources to fill any gaps.

The CNFO and its member NFOs and PFOs have shown that they are capable of influencing policy development at the regional and international levels. However, still to be fully addressed is the challenge to effectively communicate within and among the networks of fisherfolk organisations for exchange of information, collaboration, and development of consensus on policy for the governance and management of fisheries. This challenge of communicating among its membership which is spread across 17 CARICOM countries is a significant one that will have to be addressed to facilitate credible representation by the CNFO at various fora.

At the national level at which there is need for approved fisheries policies and plans, that would include measures to address the issues identified, the CNFO, NFOs and PFOs appear to be ineffective. This is due to the history and cultures of the fisherfolk organisations at the national and local levels which are more focused on business operations in mainly top down national policy and implementation environments. Though more bottom-up approaches are being promoted to policy formulation and execution, fisherfolk organisations at the local and national

levels still need to fully make the links between their issues and the various policy instruments being developed at the global, regional, and national levels or to see them as means of providing opportunities for more lasting solutions. This will provide the impetus for policy influencing at the local and national levels.

## CONCLUSION

The CNFO, which has been engaged in policy influencing at the CRFM Forum level since 2009, and which has been representing its membership as an observer at other fora such as Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC) and Committee on Fisheries (COFI), has a critical role to play in strengthening the capacity of its membership to influence policy at the local and national levels. However, for the CNFO and its member organisations to play a more effective role in policy influencing and implementation at the various levels, they will have to:

- i) Establish the network as a legal entity in order to promote good internal participatory governance, better serve its members, strengthen its partnerships, mobilise resources and achieve financial sustainability,
- ii) Finalise and mobilise resources to implement its strategy and action plan on engagement with decision-makers and stakeholders in regional fisheries policies,
- iii) Sustain the commitment and effort needed to coordinate the network and participate in policy processes at the national, regional and international levels,
- iv) Develop and implement a communication and advocacy strategy and action plan for the CNFO and its members,
- v) Develop mechanisms to sustain collaborative planning,
- vi) Develop a cadre of effective leaders at all levels,
- vii) Establish mechanisms to ensure adequate succession planning,
- viii) Strengthen network and organisational management,
- ix) Develop mechanisms for regular monitoring and evaluation, and
- x) Identify the means to achieve sustainable financing.

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