

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND MESSAGES

CRFM Side Events during 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States

27-30 May 2024; Antigua and Barbuda

Seminar 2: Accelerating the Decarbonization of Fisheries in the Caribbean: from science-based targets to climate mitigation finance (29 May 2024, in-person, off-site event)

- **Messages:**

1. Fisheries and ocean resources are very important for food security, livelihoods, and social and economic growth of SIDS;
2. Climate change and ocean acidification are existential threats to SIDS, which are feeling the full force of the impacts in the coastal and marine resources and fishing communities; notwithstanding contributing the least to the problem.
3. Key marine ecosystems such as coral reefs and reproduction, abundance and distribution of commercially important marine species in the tropics are being negatively impacted by warmer and more acidic waters, and changing ocean currents.
4. Algal blooms, including Sargassum, as well as other harmful algae are increasing due to climate change, acidification, and consequent changes in the marine ecosystems.
5. Access to financing is crucial if the sector is to retool itself and implement critical mitigation and adaptation measures to improve resilience and ensure sustainability of coastal communities and marine ecosystems and fisheries.
6. We all have a part to play in finding solutions to the challenges brought on by accelerated climate change, although some are external and difficult to address.
7. Financing sustainable fisheries management is key for improving the capacity of SIDS to withstand climate change impacts through infrastructure updates;
8. The deployment of advanced, climate-smart, technologies—including renewable energy and risk-informed early warning systems—are now urgent priorities.
9. SIDS require US\$28.7 billion annually to implement their NDCs, which embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
10. SIDS must use the NDC Partnership as a key opportunity to secure the resources needed to build resilient societies and communities.
11. Genuine and inclusive engagement of stakeholders—including the marginalized—underpins the success of future efforts to unite in addressing climate change.
12. The 79 ACP States, 39 of which are SIDS, have stewardship over 30% of the world's oceans.
13. SIDS need to examine priorities against the realities of climate change.
14. It is economically advantageous for the sector to take action to build climate resilience. These actions can include adopting more resilient shore-based infrastructure, more suitable fishing vessels designed to operate in the changing and more challenging marine environment, efficient

engines and increasing the use of renewable energy options, including solar and biogas, as well as climate-smart fishing gear and equipment.

15. Fishers continue to be actively engaged by the CRFM Secretariat through the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO), which sits on the Caribbean Fisheries Forum—a body made up of technical officers from across Member States as well as observers. Through this mechanism, fishers help to determine the technical and scientific work of the Mechanism, subject to the policy directives of the Council.

- **Key Recommendations:**

1. Consider suitable marine standards for engines on fishing vessels and promote the use of more energy efficient and clean-burning fuels. Increase reliance on renewable energy; reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and decarbonisation of the sector along the entire supply chain including harvesting, processing, storage and distribution.
2. Invest in research and development to improve data and knowledge about the marine ecosystem to address the challenges.
3. Corporate entities should enhance their data collection, ensure continuity of carbon footprint management, and guarantee the quality of information for future projects or initiatives.
4. There is a need for new approaches and revamped financing mechanisms to facilitate access to concessional development financing so that countries can navigate recurrent climate crises.
5. Resources can be directed through entities such as fishing cooperatives, which can work with members as a collective to identify priorities for action.
6. Policies and priorities have to be developed from the ground up—not using the top-down approach.
7. Efforts must be made to enhance the sector’s visibility.
8. Collaboration is needed to build a coherent SIDS Policy Framework that resonates with all SIDS regions: Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific.
9. There is the need for attention to matters of health, including eco-anxiety and other psychosocial aspects. These could be addressed within the broader framework of environmental and social safeguards.
10. Nested governance approaches can improve the effectiveness of interventions.
11. Urgently expand the provision of risk insurance for fisheries and aquaculture operations.

- **New commitments:**

1. CARICOM institutions (such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre) will be consulted on the development of a simplified multidimensional climate vulnerability index to facilitate the access of SIDS to financing to address climate impacts.
2. Health issues pertaining to climate change impacts (including ecoanxiety) to be addressed within the context of social and environmental safeguards.

3. Partners renewed commitment to remain focused and united, as they continue to strengthen partnerships.
4. There will be expanded support for the inclusion and representation of fishers in engaging at the 8th Meeting of OACPS Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture to be held in September in Tanzania.
5. A consolidated regional position on addressing climate change is to be articulated for presentation to ministers of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) of the Caribbean Community in October 2024.