

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND MESSAGES

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

27-30 May 2024; Antigua and Barbuda

Seminar 1: Revitalizing SIDS Economies & Food and Nutrition Security through the Sustainable Use of our Living Marine Resources (28 May 2024, in-person, off-site event)

- **Messages:**

1. Sustainable use of the living marine resources is a critical guiding principle that should be followed by States. Human needs must be balanced with the measures to conserve and protect biodiversity in the marine environment to ensure sustainable long-term benefits from the use of living marine resources.
2. The marine space of SIDS provides significant opportunities for food security and sustainable, resilient economic growth. Current fishing effort in Caribbean SIDS is focused on using traditional species. However, further effort is needed to assess and diversify the sector by developing and using the un-utilized, offshore and high seas marine living resource, including Sargassum.
3. Mariculture is one of the fast growing food production sectors and is being developed in some Caribbean SIDS, such as Saint Kitts and Nevis, as a viable solution to improving the supply of seafood and sustainability of fisheries through good practices.
4. Access to financing is critical for further development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector to realize its true potential.
5. Countries need to address human development, sustainable livelihoods, and food security, which need to be balanced with resource conservation and environmental protection.
6. In addition to just and fair compensation for the displacement of fishers due to developments in other sectors competing in the wider blue economic landscape, property rights for fishers must be revisited as a core tenet for achieving sustainable use of the marine resources as well as food and nutrition security and sustainable livelihoods. This is critical for establishing climate resilient financing through property rights innovation schemes.
7. A holistic approach is essential to addressing food and nutrition security through robust legal, policy, regulatory, and management frameworks.
8. SIDS share similar challenges—including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and other fisheries crimes, limited capacity, and inadequate financing—so improved cooperation and collaboration are needed across SIDS to ensure cohesive policies and priorities, as well as an equitable and inclusive approach, not just with fishers but also with persons in finance, trade, infrastructure, and other related sectors.
9. A common framework is needed to improve the understanding about resources available across ocean spaces, as well as for improving understanding of the conflicts and users.

- **Key Recommendations:**

1. Additional investments need to be attracted to tool and retool the fisheries and aquaculture sector, as well as map, evaluate and sustainably use the marine living resources available in the maritime waters
2. Governments need to ensure that they put enabling mechanisms in place to achieve the desired goals and outcomes guided by evidence-based decision-making.
3. Efforts need to be made to expand the sector through growth in aquaculture (including mariculture), as well as to expand people's palette for fish and strengthen the countries' capacities to trade in fish and seafood.
4. Climate resilience in the sector must be urgently addressed by improving marine environmental and fisheries management and climate-smart practices.
5. There is the need to ensure that the benefits derived from the fisheries and aquaculture sector are equitably distributed and shared with fish workers and others who are producing value across the sector.
6. The right of access to fisheries resources is key for sustainable fisheries and improved welfare of fishing communities. Tenure and access rights can be ascribed to fishers, and they can have rights-based tenure.
7. The focus needs to be on economic and social sustainability—not just environmental sustainability.

- **New commitments:**

1. Strengthen focus on the expansion of the sector through viable climate-smart practices and solutions that expand production in aquaculture/mariculture and non-traditional marine species while promoting property rights for fishers and just compensation in the event that they are displaced.
2. Work together to apply a more holistic, coordinated, and collaborative approach across SIDS to address the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the sector.
3. Increase efforts to improve research and development as well as to strengthen the regional and policy frameworks across SIDS.