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Time Has Come For Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy

Belize City – September 18th, 2013 - The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) today began a region-wide public awareness campaign supporting ratification of the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP), a regional treaty on conservation, management and sustainable utilisation of fisheries resources. The policy has been approved at virtually every level of government in the affected nations, except at the Head-of-State level. All that remains is the signature of at least eight CARICOM heads of state.

“Times are tough all over the world,” said Mr. Milton Haughton, CRFM Executive Director. “Like everybody else, Caribbean nations must find new ways to boost their economies. The fishing sector is the one area of Caribbean economies that presents real opportunities for wealth creation through diversification, innovation and cooperation. Provisions of the CCCFP are to facilitate transformation of the sector so that it is more market-oriented, more internationally competitive and more environmentally sustainable. We urge people to let their leaders know that they support implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy.”

Mr. Haughton said there is the need for more fisheries-generated employment and income not only to improve the livelihoods and welfare of fishers, but also to expand the overall regional

economy. He pointed out the benefits of increasing fish processing in the region--value-added products capturing more of the profits and creating more jobs. Mr. Haughton added that diversification by pursuing under- or unexploited species of fish is an accessible target. The policy also supports more market research and market access, marketing and sector trade development to support fishers.

Who stands to benefit from the CCCFP's closer cooperation among CARICOM Member States? According to government officials in Caribbean fisheries management, the improved regulations and enforcement provided by the CCCFP will better protect fisher folk livelihoods that are put at risk by illegal fishing. Caribbean citizens can share in the social and economic improvements in the welfare of fishers through employment and income generation, strengthened food and nutrition security, and research in support of marketing, trade and aquaculture.

“All Caribbean peoples share a common link to the resource—the fisheries—as well as a shared responsibility to protect and conserve fish stocks and ecosystems from degradation due to irresponsible fishing, pollution, habitat degradation and climate change,” said Mr. Haughton. “We all can move together toward securing a brighter, more prosperous future and sustainable fisheries through ratification and implementation of the treaty.”

The CCCFP awareness project is funded by the ACP Fish II Programme, a European Union-funded initiative. Representatives of PBLH International Consulting (Brussels) and SOJE Lonsdale (Barbados) are engaged on the project. Direct beneficiary countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.
