PRESS RELEASE

in conjunction with

A NEW REGIONAL FISHERIES STRATEGY

Information and Knowledge Sharing are Key to Sustainable Fisheries Management

– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

BELIZE CITY, BELIZE; FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2013

The Caribbean island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, home to the Eastern Caribbean Office of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), will next week host Chief Fisheries Officers, Directors of Fisheries or Senior Fisheries Officers, and Technical ICT Officers responsible for fisheries management, data management and communication from Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The regional professionals will be meeting for the ACP Fish II/CRFM regional technical consultation dubbed *Strengthening the Capacity of CRFM and its Member States for Information and Knowledge Sharing on Sustainable Management of Fisheries in the Caribbean Region,* slated for January 28 and 29 at the Sunset Shore Beach Hotel in Kingstown.

The event, which is funded by the European Union through the ACP Fish II Programme, is geared at producing an improved Communication Strategy for the CRFM in line with international best practices. It is being facilitated by the CRFM Secretariat and PBLH International Consulting Experts.

Organizers say that the consultation will involve the presentation of the revised Communication Strategy by PBLH International Consulting SPRL experts, and its discussion and validation by key regional stakeholders for regional endorsement.

Participants will explore IT opportunities for the CRFM Secretariat to improve service delivery to Member States and to better execute the mandates from the CRFM agreement and the Common Fisheries Policy. They will also review the current situation facing information exchange in the region, changes required on the website, as well as the capacity-building requirements.

On the heels of the ICT consultation, Directors of Fisheries, Chief Fisheries Officers or Fisheries Administrators from the CRFM Member States will meet at the same venue on Wednesday, January 30, 2013, for the *Regional Workshop to Develop a Draft Second Strategic Plan for the CRFM.*

The CRFM's first Strategic Plan, which guided the formulation of its annual work plans and budgets, was implemented through two medium-term plans which spanned April 2003-March 2007 and April 2008-March 2012, respectively. Next Wednesday's meeting will advance several months of work to formulate a new eight-year Strategic Plan for the CRFM to span 2013-2021.

Last June, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) approved a small Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) facility project of US$99,000 in response to a request from the CRFM for assistance in conducting a performance review and formulating the new strategic plan. The St. Vincent workshop is the 3rd meeting under the project.

This project is funded by the European Union
The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

A first workshop supported by the project was held in Belize as a side meeting of the gathering of ministers from Central America and the Caribbean (CRFM and OSPESCA - the Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of Central America) on September 3-4, 2012. In that workshop members of the FAO performance review team met with key stakeholders, sought their opinion on the review methodology and collected information.

A second workshop was held in Jamaica on December 5, 2012, to discuss and validate the initial analysis carried out by the FAO team working on the CRFM Performance Review and to initiate stakeholder discussions on the new Strategic Plan.

The independent review of the CRFM's performance will be advanced at the upcoming St. Vincent meeting. The workshop will also result in recommendations for strengthening and improving the CRFM and its contribution to the sustainable development, conservation and management of CARICOM's fisheries resources.

The 2013-2021 Strategic Plan for the CRFM will be tabled for discussion and endorsement by the CRFM Forum in April 2013 and 7th Ministerial Council of CRFM in May 2013.

ACP Fish II Programme

ACP FISH II is a demand driven Programme financed under the 9th European Development Fund, which aims to strengthen fisheries management in ACP countries. **The overall objective** of the Programme is to contribute to the sustainable and equitable management of fisheries, thus leading to poverty alleviation and improving food security in ACP states. The **specific objective** of the Programme is to strengthen fisheries sectorial policy development and implementation in ACP countries.

For further information on the ACP Fish II Programme, please visit: http://www.acpfish2-eu.org OR contact ACP Fish II Programme Regional Manager for the Caribbean Region: Sandra Grant (s.grant@acpfish2-eu.org / 011(501) 223 2974).

The CRFM

The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) was officially inaugurated on March 27, 2003, in Belize City, Belize, where it is headquartered, following the signing of the "Agreement Establishing the CRFM" on February 4, 2002. It is an inter-governmental organization with its mission being "to promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region's fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region."

The CRFM consists of three bodies: the Ministerial Council, the Caribbean Fisheries Forum and the CRFM Secretariat. Its members are Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

For more information on the CRFM visit http://www.caricom-fisheries.com).

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