



4th February 2009

PRESS RELEASE

**Commonwealth Study Team Calls For Revaluation Of Caribbean Fisheries And A
Balanced Approach To Development And Food Security**

A Commonwealth study tour team, completing a three nation Caribbean inquiry in Belize today (4 February, 2009), concludes that countries in the region need a more balanced approach to development and tourism, which gives a higher priority to fisheries and traditional fishing communities.

The team, from four nations, has been on an intensive study tour to St Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Belize from 24 January to 4 February, 2009. They have met fishery and environment officials, fishers and their cooperatives, and non-governmental organisations and appreciate the generous assistance of all of them, especially the relevant Ministers in St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. They have made field visits in each country – to the Soufriere Marine Management Area in St Lucia, to the Bucco Reef Marine Park in Tobago, and to see marine protected areas near Caye Caulker and San Pedro in Belize (Hol Chan, etc.).

The study is part of a two year Commonwealth Fisheries Programme which will position the Commonwealth as a major player in reducing the depletion of marine fish resources, promoting sustainable management strategies, and supporting the long-term viability and sustainability of coastal fishing communities. Other findings of the study tour include:

- The need for increased monitoring and surveillance to implement fishing regulations, and the prevention of illegal fishing
- The urgent need to update legislation governing fishing and marine resources
- That there is a strong case for the Commonwealth to introduce a carefully designed Fisheries Fund to support initiatives in traditional fishing communities, and for donor countries to earmark support for small island states
- That mechanisms be devised to ensure the continued survival of the small-scale fishers

The Commonwealth Fisheries Programme is jointly managed by the Commonwealth Foundation, an intergovernmental body which supports civil society, the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit, a think-tank which is part of London University, and the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, the Commonwealth's environmental NGO. It is funded by the Department for International Development, UK, and AusAid, the aid arm of the Australian Government.

The programme is preparing a report for Commonwealth leaders who meet in Trinidad in November 2009 and includes study tours, case study work, and meetings of civil society and presentations to Fisheries Ministers in Southern Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean. Progress reports will be given to London High Commissioners in June, 2009, and to Commonwealth officials at their FAO fisheries meeting in Rome next month.

Belize City, 4 February, 2009

Members of the Commonwealth Study Tour in the Caribbean

Belize

Celia Mahung, Executive Director, TIDE (Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment)

Armando Ramirez, President, Southern Fishermen's Association

St Lucia

Sonia Cazaubon, Project Officer, Soufriere Marine Management Association

Laudiana Laurence, Ranger, Soufriere Marine Management Association

Trinidad and Tobago

Nerissa Lucky, Seafood Industry Development Company

Arthur Potts, Institute of Marine Affairs, University of Trinidad and Tobago

Study Tour Coordinators

Homera Cheema, Project Officer, Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit

Sandra Grant, Consultant in Fisheries Management, Belize

Study Tour Leader

Richard Bourne, Associate Fellow, Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Fisheries – Our Common Wealth is an international programme aimed at ensuring sustainability and improving the livelihoods of coastal communities in developing countries. Managed by a consortium of Commonwealth organisations, the two-year programme combines their expertise and networks to raise awareness and develop a knowledge base to help provide effective long-term solutions for fisheries management.

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Commonwealth Foundation

The Commonwealth Foundation is an intergovernmental organisation, resourced by and reporting to Commonwealth governments, and guided by Commonwealth values and priorities. Its mandate is to strengthen civil society in the achievement of Commonwealth priorities - democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable, people-centred development, and to promote arts and culture. www.commonwealthfoundation.com

Commonwealth Human Ecology Council

CHEC works to promote education, research, practical projects and policy that support a human ecological approach to development. This approach addresses the complex

relations between social systems and ecosystems at all levels as well as related mechanisms of governance. As a non-governmental organisation, CHEC works closely with its regional Chapters and Commonwealth Universities on local projects. Through these, it strengthens its knowledge base and understanding of areas such as forestry; human settlements; health and nutrition; capacity analysis and development for small island states; water and energy, and education for sustainable development. This information is also shared at an international level through advice and advocacy in the United Nations and Commonwealth arenas. www.checinternational.org

Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit

The CPSU is the think-tank for the Commonwealth of 53 countries. They work to inform and influence policy decisions affecting commonwealth countries on issues such as democracy, human rights, economic development and civil society. The CPSU conduct research studies to inform and influence policy makers in over a quarter of the world's countries. They seek to put the policy choices before the Commonwealth into sharper focus, exploring options and suggesting new directions.

www.cpsu.org.uk

Follow the programme on-line: www.commonwealthfisheries.org



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