

# PRESS RELEASE

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**PRESS CONTACT** NAME: Milton Haughton, Executive Director  
PHONE: 501-223-4443  
E-mail: [milton.haughton@crfm.int](mailto:milton.haughton@crfm.int)

## Fisheries Ministers seek new strategic direction during 11<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting of the CRFM Ministerial Council

*Ministers are charting a new strategic direction for the fisheries and aquaculture sector, which provides livelihoods and food for millions across the region*

Belize City, Saturday, 2 October 2021 (CRFM)—Ministers responsible for Fisheries from Member States of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) are scheduled to meet on Monday, 4 October 2021, during the 16<sup>th</sup> observance of the [Caribbean Week of Agriculture](#). The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the new strategic direction for the fisheries and aquaculture sector, which produced fish with an estimated ex-vessel value of US\$480 million in 2020, despite the economic devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CRFM, an institution of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), will convene the meeting to advance a new strategic 9-year direction for the organization, which also considers the emerging realities being brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the growing challenges facing the sector due to climate change and its adverse impacts.



*Small-scale fisheries are of vital importance to the Caribbean.*

Ministers from CRFM Member States will be asked to approve the Third CRFM Strategic Plan for the period January 2022 to December 2030, as well as the complementary CRFM Resource Mobilization Strategy, which takes on a results-based approach to mobilizing much needed resources for the organization and its 17 Member States and partner organisations in the region.

The CRFM's Plan addresses improved evidence-based decision making, conservation and management of the fisheries and protection of marine ecosystems, climate change and disaster risk management, and the expansion of sustainable aquaculture, including mariculture. It also promotes programmes aimed at improving the welfare and socio-economic situation of fishers and fishing communities in the region, by focusing on value addition and wealth creation, capacity building, use of technology, entrepreneurship, partnership ventures with private and public sector parties, and strengthening application of good governance principles, such as equity and equality, inclusiveness, and accountability.

Furthermore, the Ministers will be asked to review and approve a policy document supporting the drafting and approval of the Model Fisheries Legislation on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures. The Draft Model Aquatic Animal Health Bill and the Draft Model Aquatic Food Safety Regulations, developed under the EU-funded 10<sup>th</sup> Economic Development Fund (EDF) Programme, are aimed at assuring safety and quality of fish and seafood available for domestic as well as export markets, in line with international standards, while maximizing economic gains for the sector.

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#### ABOUT THE CRFM:

The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) was officially inaugurated on 27 March 2003 in Belize City, Belize, where it is headquartered, following the signing of the “Agreement Establishing the CRFM” on 4 February 2002. It is an inter-governmental organization whose mission is “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.”

#### CRFM social media links:

You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheCRFM>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CarFisheries>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CaribFisheries>

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**P.O. Box 642, Princess Margaret Drive, Belize City, Belize, C.A.**

Tel: 501-223-4443 Fax: 501-223-4446

Email: [secretariat@crfm.int](mailto:secretariat@crfm.int) website: <https://www.crfm.int/>