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NEWS RELEASE

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FAO Hooked on 24 Champions of Small-Scale Fisheries and Aquaculture

29 June 2022, Bridgetown, Barbados – In recognition of the millions of small-scale fishers, fish farmers and fish workers who provide healthy and nutritious food to billions of people globally and contribute to eradicating hunger, The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2022 the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has the distinct honour of leading the celebrations for the year in collaboration with other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. In the fishing industry, artisanal fishing or traditional fisheries involves fishing households as opposed to commercial companies, using relatively small amount of capital and energy, relatively small fishing vessels (if any), making short fishing trips, close to shore, mainly for local consumption.

Held under the theme, ***“Recovery and Resilience, with Gender and Youth***, the goal of IYAFA 2022 in the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) region is to promote the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture food systems to enhance the well-being of producers as well as consumers. Globally, fisheries is an important sector and provides both primary and secondary sources of income in various regions, contributing to food security and nutrition across the Caribbean region.

An important part of the IYAFA celebrations is the recognition of champions, individuals or entities who have played a significant role in the sector and who have the potential to further influence progress in the development of sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture food systems.

Therefore, the first call for nominations was opened in September 2021 and closed in November 2021. Following a successful first call, a second call was announced in January 2022 and closed in March 2022. The WECAFC Secretariat received and accepted 34 nominations from across the area of competence, including from Member States and partner organizations. The WECAFC IYAFA steering committee subsequently selected 24 small-scale fisheries and aquaculture champions from across the region representing academia, civil society, policy-makers, small-scale fisheries and aquaculture (SSF/A) leaders, and organizations. These champions will play an active role in the celebrations participating in regional and national activities.

We are pleased to announce the champions which are as follows:

Policy makers - Ministers and/or ministries responsible for small-scale fisheries, small-scale aquaculture (SSA) and related areas

Hon. Saboto Caesar, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry & Labour - ***St. Vincent & the Grenadines***

Ministerio del Poder Popular de Pesca y Acuicultura, ***Venezuela***

Academia/Researchers

Leisa Perch, ***Barbados***

Dr. Patrick McConney, ***Barbados***

Dr. Alejandro Espinoza Tenorio, ***México***

Chief Fisheries Officers/Directors of Fisheries, fisheries officers, aquaculture officers, coastal zone and management officers, cooperative officers and/or fisheries and related authorities

Terrence Philips, ***Barbados***

Shellene Berry, ***Jamaica***

Rabani Gajnabi, ***Guyana***

Nicolás del Castillo Piedrahita, ***Colombia***

Jullan Defoe, ***Commonwealth of Dominica***

Civil Society

Asociación de Acuicultores del Caquetá -ACUICA, Sociedad civil / Comunidad de ONG, ***Colombia***

Piscícola San Silvestre, Sociedad civil/Comunidad de ONG, ***Colombia***

Proyecto Nasa Piscícola Juan Tama, Sociedad Civil/ ONG, ***Colombia***

Future Fishers, ***Trinidad & Tobago***

Small-scale fisher-folk leaders, small-scale aquaculture leaders

Rodolfo Manuel Florez Bossio (Asociación de Pescadores y Comercializadores La Coporita), ***Colombia***

Vernel Nicholls, ***Barbados***

Pamashwar Jainarine, ***Guyana***

Winsbert Harry, ***Saint Vincent and the Grenadines***

Kaygiana Toussaint Charlery, ***Saint Lucia***

Melissa Taitt, ***Barbados***

Asociación de Agricultores y Pescadores Artesanales del Pacifico (ASOAGRIPESPA) – **small-scale Fisher folk organization, Colombia**

Renita Joseph – **Small and micro fisheries or aquaculture enterprises along the value chain, Guyana**

Dr. Ryan Simon Mohammed – **Small-scale aquaculture leader, Trinidad and Tobago**

In nominating Hon. Saboto S. Caesar, policy-maker champion and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry & Labour in St. Vincent and The Grenadines, The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) indicated that the minister is poised “to focus regional attention on the role that small-scale fishers, fish farmers and fish workers play in food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, and sustainable use of natural resources.”

Alejandro Espinoza, academic/researcher and champion from Mexico stated, “Throughout the international year, I will use my best abilities to provide the best available knowledge to the men and women in Mexico and regionally who depend on artisanal fisheries and aquaculture on key issues such as human rights, the risks to biodiversity, generational change in the sector and the challenges of climate change.”

Senator Kaygianna Toussaint Charley, St. Lucia, also a champion stated, “As an advocate for the fishing community, I am very much interested in seeing the much-needed changes that will bring greater recognition to the trade and its contribution to the GDP of the country thereby increasing capital injection in the sector to bring about modernization and increase the bottom line for the stakeholders”.

In their nomination, The Association of Aquaculture Producers of Caquetá (ACUICA - Civil Society Champion from Colombia) representatives stated that “being selected as a champion will allow our group to continue working to expand the academic and research”.

Meanwhile, Yvette DieiOuadi, FAO’s Fisheries Officer and WECAFC Secretary stated, “Celebrating these Champions on 29 June, an important Day in the Caribbean, the Fisherman’s Day, is a memorable and timely opportunity. For they have exemplified and demonstrated a significant commitment to the ongoing sustainable development of a sector which is vital, far beyond regional reach. Throughout the celebratory year they will be engaged in activities representing the holistic and multiscale approach, that WECAFC has taken to the celebrate IYAFA in the region”.

For more information:

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