Fish IN

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Newsletter of the Seafood Industry

of Trinidad and Tobago



CELEBRATING FISHERMAN'S DAY

June 29th is the feast day of St Peter, patron saint of fisherfolk. Peter was one of Christ's first apostles and many people believe he was also the first Pope of the Christian Church.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

This is the first issue of FISH-IN, a quarterly newsletter of and for stakeholders of the seafood industry in Trinidad & Tobago. The launching of this newsletter coincides with the celebration of World Fisherman's Day, and is our way of recognising the contribution of those who work in one of the most challenging professions in the world.

This newsletter is intended to strengthen the linkages between fishing communities, vendors, processors, agencies and other individuals who are involved in the industry. It would therefore, be an important tool to further the process of modernising the sector.

We believe this publication will help create greater awareness among stakeholders on issues affecting the industry, encourage sector unification and serve a host of other useful purposes.

We encourage stakeholders to embrace this newsletter as their own and as such, we welcome your suggestions on how it can be improved to more effectively serve your needs. As this newsletter evolves, let us all nurture it to ensure that it is here to stay, and becomes something of which the industry can be proud.

Editorial Committee:

Doon Ramsaroop	Chief Executive Officer, SIDC
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Continued from cover...

The Bible tells us that Peter was a fisherman, and it is this connection that makes his feast day so significant to fisherfolk the world over. Some of the local coastal communities that have highly anticipated Fisherman's Day celebrations are Carenage, Moruga, Fullerton, Toco and Belle Garden in Tobago. Celebratory activities in Tobago are sometimes also a part of harvest festivals which take place during the months of June to October.

In each community, the day usually begins with a church service where fisherfolk give thanks, pray for bountiful harvests and ask for continued blessings in the year to come. Boats are blessed by the parish priest—and then the partying starts. There are family events, boating activities, good food to eat and block-parties. The merry-making often goes on until the early hours of the next morning.

In commemoration of World Fisherman's Day 2008, *the Board of Directors and Staff of the Seafood Industry Development Company (SIDC) and the management of the Trinidad and Tobago United Fisherfolk (TTUF),* take this opportunity to wish our brothers and sisters in the industry, all God's Blessings .

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

FISHERMAN'S DAY ACTIVITIES 2008

June

- Claxton Bay: Boat races and treats for kids
- San Fernando: Sports activities
- Toco: Lunch for seniors and treats for children
- Gran Riviere/Matelot: Fisherman's fête
- Charlotteville: Fun activities and Fisherman's fête

August

- Toco: Fundraiser for next year's celebrations (Date TBA)
- Moruga: 2nd annual "Threesome"—the celebration of Discovery Day, Emancipation Day and St Peter's Day. Queen show and sporting activities

October

- Belle Garden: Sports and family day including fishing activities, water sports, and performing artists from Trinidad.

PARTNERING WITH TOBAGO

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the SIDC and the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) was signed in January 2008. This MOU clearly outlines the roles, responsibilities and mode of operation for each agency. The SIDC will be guided by the THA and other industry stakeholders in developing mutually beneficial projects and activities geared towards the short, medium and long-term development of the seafood industry of Tobago.



Handing over of signed MOU –January 2008

TOBAGO CONSULTATION

The Department of Agriculture, Marine Affairs, Marketing and the Environment and the Department of Marine Resources and Fisheries of the Tobago House of Assembly held a Consultation for Fisherfolk of Tobago on Monday 30th June, 2008, at Rovanel's Resort.

The objective of the consultation was to obtain the views and recommendations of fisheries stakeholders on several issues including fisheries infrastructure, management of the marine environment and seafood processing. Data was collected from fisherfolk to determine the needs of the sector in Tobago. This data will form part of the developmental plans for the fisheries sector on the island. The All Tobago Fisherfolk Association (ATFA) assisted by organising fisherfolk participation from various communities around Tobago.



QUESTION!
How can I get subsidies on boats, equipment or fuel?

A: You are entitled to subsidies once you are a registered fisherman with the Fisheries Division and you own a fishing vessel which is also registered with the Fisheries Division . VAT Exemption is available on boats, engines, engine parts, marine accessories, boat building material and on oil. You can also obtain fuel rebates once you have registered your engine with the Fisheries Division. Forms are available at the Fisheries Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, 35 Cipriani Boulevard, Port of Spain. Tel: 623-8525/6028



Fish Lovers' Cookbook

Fish lovers will soon have access to a seafood cookbook published by the SIDC. The cookbook will contain preparation techniques and recipes that focus on "low preference" species such as blinch and croaker. It will also provide tips on selecting good quality seafood.

Consumers will be taken on an exciting journey to explore a whirlwind of culinary possibilities.

WOMEN IN FISHING



Women in Trinidad and Tobago are playing increasingly important roles in most professions. Fishing is no exception and the women of the south-east coast of Trinidad are true examples of this. Some of the women actually engage in fishing while others help their husbands as they assisted their parents before with the mending of nets or the building of fish pots.

They process fish, keep the books and give support to the work that provides their livelihood. The women of this rural coastal community have taken their roles one step further, and formed themselves into the Women In Fishing Association (WIFA), so they can work more effectively to develop their community and the fishing industry.

WIFA is the first organisation of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago. Bernadette Fonrose, WIFA's president, says the group wants to change the impression people have that those who work in the seafood industry squander their hard earned cash, and are not progressive members of society.

Beginnings

According to Ms. Fonrose, the women were encouraged by Rosemarie Kishore and Hema Ramdath of the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) to form an association.

The women were ready for the idea: "*In the past we were only recognized as fishermen's spouses,*" says Bernadette, *"but we decided we had the ability to improve the industry if we came together to address the issues that affect our sector."* WIFA liaises with the energy companies in the area and other State agencies, such as SIDC to facilitate training courses for women who wish to acquire technical and other business skills. They are the "watchdogs" for their community and are very vocal on activities that may create environmental problems or harm fish stocks.

They are working closely with the SIDC to promote business development and are establishing a fish processing plant in their area.

Fish Processing

At present, WIFA smokes fish and stores it in a large freezer at the home of Sherene Arjoon, WIFA's Vice President. However, Ms. Fonrose says, they "need to increase capacity and structure themselves into a full-fledged business." The women are making plans to rent a small building for the processing facility and have approached the SIDC for technical advice and support.

They hope to fillet, smoke and salt fish for sale to supermarkets. Their dream is to open a "deli" or seafood restaurant where they can share their expertise at preparing delicious and healthy fish dishes and products.



Bernadette Fonrose



Sherene Arjoon

Q: How can I get training for advancement in the fishing industry?

A: A number of agencies offer training, including the Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute (CFTDI) in Chaguaramas. The CFTDI conducts training courses relevant to the industry. SIDC encourages fisherfolk and industry stakeholders to take part in courses that will help them develop their skills.

EMPOWERING COASTAL COMMUNITIES



The SIDC and the National Financial Literacy Programme

of the Central Bank recently joined forces to provide financial management training to fisherfolk from fifteen fishing communities around Trinidad. Cyril Rogers, President of the Cedros Fishing Co-operative said that this type of training was long overdue and that fisherfolk around the country would benefit enormously from the sessions.

The sessions were conducted by highly trained professionals affiliated with the National Financial Literacy Programme. Information on budgeting, saving and investment options was provided to participants. The sessions were well received in the communities, with fisherfolk expressing the view that multiple sessions should be held to allow greater participation from community members.

Bernadette Fonrose, President of the Women in Fishing Association, said "the seminar was especially important for women in the fishing industry" since in many instances the women were responsible for the day-to-day management of the household. She also said that it was important for women, especially if they were single parents, to acquire the tools needed to assist them on the road to financial independence.

Fishing associations and co-operatives from Tobago are also looking forward to this type of training and plans are on stream to provide this service to them.



Q: Why join/form a Primary Fisherfolk Organisation (Fishing Association or Fishing Co-operative) in your community?

A: As the saying goes, "Unity is Strength". As a member of a PFO, you would be able to discuss issues affecting the fishing industry. Once a decision is made, your group can speak with "**one voice",** on issues affecting your livelihood. Your organisation can also engage in business activities that can financially and socially benefit members.

ICE IT...ICE IT...ICE IT !



The use of adequate amounts of ice is important in retaining seafood quality and ensuring food safety. Ice lowers the temperature of seafood. The lower the temperature the longer the storage life of seafood.

Upon landing the catch, seafood should be washed with clean seawater and immediately iced to lower the temperature as close to 0°C as possible.

This temperature (0°C) should be maintained throughout the storage and distribution process. As ice melts, it washes the seafood reducing bacteria on the surface. It further keeps the product moist, so preventing drying out (dehydration).

SPECIES	*Average Storage LIFE on ICE at 0°C (Days)*
Bonito	9
Carite	10
Cavalli	14
Croaker	10-14
Grouper	6-14
Kingfish	12
Snapper	12-14

STORAGE

Storage containers should be insulated to reduce the rate at which ice melts and should be covered to prevent cross contamination. Containers should be strong, easy to clean, lightweight, airtight, light in colour and *should not impart odours to the seafood.* They should also have good drainage to remove melted ice water which may contain bacteria.

HOW MUCH ICE TO USE

STORAGE LOCATION	QUANTITY OF ICE	QUANTITY OF SEAFOOD
FISH-HOLD (ONBOARD VESSEL)	3 kg (6.6 lbs)	1 kg (2.2lbs)
TRANSPORT CONTAINERS (ON LAND)	2 kg (4.4 lbs)	1 kg (2.2 lbs)
STORAGE CONTAINERS (ON LAND)	2 kg (4.4 lbs)	1 kg (2.2 lbs)





NEW ICE MACHINE IN TOCO

Ice is critical to ensure the quality of fish caught. Accessing ice in rural communities may sometimes prove a challenge to fisherfolk. Having recognised this problem, the SIDC with the permission of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land & Marine Resources, provided an ice making machine for the North Eastern Cluster of fishing communities.

The machine has been installed at the Toco Fishing Depot, a central location serving the communities from Salybia to Matelot. This forms part of the SIDC's strategy in promoting the modernisation of the local seafood industry and empowering coastal fishing communities.

The SIDC intends to operate the facility for a short period of time while providing training and mentoring to the local fishing association in the area. It is anticipated that the Association will assume responsibility for the management of this community-owned business enterprise.

An ice machine in this area would give the fishers a significant level of independence from outside forces, affording them much greater control over their affairs, especially as it relates to what they are paid for their fish.

The Toco fishing fraternity has the unique opportunity to become pioneers in developing a model for coastal economic diversification in Trinidad and Tobago and, indeed, the region. The SIDC is committed to supporting the development of other areas of business activity in the community.





Ice making machine installed at Toco Fishing Depot

Getting TTUF

The Trinidad and Tobago Unified Fisherfolk (TTUF) is the national organisation representing fisherfolk in Trinidad and Tobago. There are 34 Primary Fisherfolk Organisations (PFOs) in the country, nine of them are registered as fishing co-operatives, while 25 are associations. The core membership of TTUF is derived from these fishing groups.

TTUF's purpose is to assist the PFOs in achieving their goals and improving the livelihoods of their members. Current issues being discussed by TTUF members at their regular meetings include:

- *improving the infrastructure at landing sites*
- *developing a National Insurance plan for fisherfolk*
- *conflict issues with other resource users and*
- *security concerns over piracy*



Left to right: Emile Louis, Bernadette Fonrose, Peter Glodon, Salim Gool

TTUF's first Annual General Meeting was held at the CLR James Learning Resource Centre in San Fernando on December 13, 2007. The following are the current members of the Board:

President-Emile Louis, All Tobago Fisherfolk
Vice-president-Peter Glodon, Moruga/La Ruffin Fishing Co-operative
Treasurer-Bernadette Fonrose, Women in Fishing Association
Secretary-Salim Gool, San Fernando Fishing Co-operative
Assistant Secretary-David Dubar, Cacandee/Felicity Fishing Association
Alternate-Kishore Boodram, Claxton Bay Fishing Association

CHARTING A NEW DIRECTION

The Seafood Industry Development Company is a state company established in 2006 under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Its mandate is to partner with stakeholders to ensure the seafood industry of Trinidad and Tobago becomes viable on a sustainable basis in the shortest possible time. To fulfil its purpose, the SIDC has adopted a four-fold strategy which addresses the critical elements necessary for the success of the sector and by extension the company.

SIDC'S strategy will address the need for the sustainable use of fisheries resources and the creation of an environment that promotes profitability, competitiveness and innovation in the sector.

Studies have revealed that stocks of many of the inshore coastal species in Trinidad and Tobago are already fully exploited or over-exploited. SIDC's strategies to address this would include promoting the development of alternative sources of raw materials through aquaculture and offshore fishing, where appropriate.

We aim to enhance profitability and competitiveness by developing infrastructure that meets international food safety standards, improving access to markets, training and mentoring, and promoting entrepreneurship through business development.

Encouraging collaboration between government and industry stakeholders to ensure maximum participation in all fishery-related interests, is another approach the SIDC will adopt. The board of directors of the SIDC exemplifies this multi-sector approach to development by drawing its membership from various government agencies and the private sector. Board members are drawn from the Tobago House of Assembly and the Ministries of Trade and Industry, Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, and Health. Also on the board are representatives of artisanal fisher folk and processors from both Trinidad and Tobago, as well as representatives of the industrial fishing sector.

The SIDC recognises the need to empower coastal fishing communities and is committed to maintaining sustainable livelihoods. The company will promote the transformation of fishing communities so that they become socially resilient and self-reliant by supporting the formation and strengthening of community-based fishing organisations (PFOs and a National Fisherfolk Organisation-NFO) and empowering them to engage in business related activities. Training and mentoring programmes are being implemented to improve the livelihood of fisherfolk in coastal communities.



SIDC- Board Of Directors

Standing left to right:

Richard Ramsawak, Carlisle Jordon, Charles James, Deoraj Ramcharan and Emile Louis

Seated left to right:

Dr. Doon Ramsaroop (Chief Executive Officer), Bruno Maharaj (Chairman), Ingrid Meyer.

Absent: Winston Gibson and Peter Glodon

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