



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs**

## **JOINT COMMUNIQUE**

### **MEETING BETWEEN THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES FOR FISHERIES IN BARBADOS AND TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

#### **PORT OF SPAIN: 7<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2023**

Senior Government Officials with responsibility for fisheries management in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago met virtually on November 2, 2023 to discuss in detail matters related to the Eastern Caribbean flying fish stock. At the invitation of both countries, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), an organisation tasked, *inter alia*, with the promotion of the sustainable use of the region's fisheries and other marine resources, also participated in these vitally important talks.

The Barbados delegation was led by the country's Ambassador to CARICOM, Mr. David Comissiong, and comprised Chief Fisheries Officer, Dr. Shelly Ann Cox, Ms. Vernel Nicholls, President of the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisations (BARNUFO), and senior officials from the Barbados Fisheries Division and the Ministries of Blue Economy and Foreign Affairs. Lead representative for Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Sunita Harrikissoon, was ably supported by Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly, the Hon. Farley Chavez Augustine; Secretary of the Division of Food Security, Natural Resources, the Environment and Sustainable Development, Mrs. Nathisha Pantin, as well as other senior officers from the Tobago House of Assembly. Officials from Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Agriculture and Coast Guard also participated in the discussions.

These talks were convened in fulfilment of the mandate issued to the fisheries technocrats of both countries by their respective Heads of Government, the Hon. Mia Amor Mottley, S.C., M.P. and Dr. the Hon. Keith Rowley, M.P., following media reports of concerns expressed by some Tobagonian fisherfolk regarding possible overfishing of the shared flying fish stock.

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The talks were cordial and productive, with the two sides exchanging views on a number of significant issues, including the operationalisation of a collaborative research regime that would see the conduct of a sub-regional fish stock assessment with a focus on flying fish and associated species. Crucially, the two countries also indicated their desire to enter negotiations towards the conclusion of a new Fishing Agreement in the future.

Both sides acknowledged and lauded the fraternal and extremely positive relationship that exists between the fisherfolk of both countries and agreed that all stakeholders would continue to be fully consulted moving forward.

Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago have a longstanding, fruitful relationship underpinned by friendship and mutual respect. The fisherfolk communities of both countries can be assured that their respective Governments remain committed to a process of open communication and will take on board the guidance and input of the competent regional fisheries mechanisms to ensure the sustainable use of this important shared resource.

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