



MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES

**Statement by the Honourable Karl Samuda, CD, MP
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE AND
FISHERIES**

Post Fisheries Industry Retreat

Iberostar Hotel and Suites, Montego Bay

Friday, June 17, 2016

2:00 p.m.

Salutations

Size of and Importance of Industry

When we talk about the fishing industry, let's not forget that this is a vast and important industry. Globally, this industry is worth 136 billion US dollars. Jamaica has only a small slice of that with our total production valued at 86.84 million US dollars.

Over the last two days of this retreat we have had very extensive, frank and fruitful deliberations relating to this extremely important and sensitive industry and I wish to acknowledge the participation of the various stakeholder groups, including industrial and artisanal fishers. It was fortuitous that we also had the participation of representatives from the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) who met here in Jamaica for their 10th Ministerial Council meeting.

Enactment of Fisheries Bill

We have had to wait too long for the new Fisheries Bill and I am committed to bringing this Bill to Parliament and will ensure that the next steps are expedited.

This new Fisheries Bill will allow for a nine member Licensing Authority with all the provisions and safeguards for greater transparency. Currently the licensing authority is just one person.

It also provides for the establishment of a 13 member National Fisheries Advisory Council that will give guidance to myself on all matters relating to Fisheries and Aquaculture.

In addition to the increased fines now in place, we will be pursuing a regime for ticketable offences. This will be similar to what obtains with traffic tickets- where an offender is fined via a ticket and must make payments to the tax office.

It will also include new categories of licences to be implemented such as the Local Fishing Vessel Licence, the Foreign Fishing Vessel Licence as well as the High Seas Fishing Vessel Licence.

Expansion of Markets and Species

These meetings have shown us that there is a large untapped market of pelagic or open sea fish which we need to explore. Aquaculture is also growing rapidly and we see this as another possible area of expansion. We do have healthy fish stocks. However we believe that expansion into these areas could ease the pressure on some of our own marine resources.

It is my intention to overhaul the allocation criteria and mechanisms for these resources. The new mechanisms will allow for the encouragement of new investment, even while enabling long standing players to make a decent return on their investments.

The Ministry is committed to the implementation of a new Lobster Regime for the 2017/ 2018 Lobster Season. I am pleased that the industry actively participated in the creation of a Proposed Lobster Regime along with the Ministry's technical team and officials.

The regime will clearly outline steps for the granting of lobster licences. This process will be equitable, with due consideration to the management of the resource in a sustainable way. It will allow for new entrants, but will also support current investors.

The regime should be completed by October and we expect it to be implemented early next year.

The regime will encourage greater investment in the acquisition of more boats, as well as marketing and research and development. This will ensure that more jobs are created in the sector. However artisanal fisher folk will not be placed at a disadvantage as a result of this move.

We recognize the significance of the small players to the industry and will continue to protect them. We have a commitment in keeping with our mandate to support

the development of the MSME sector and we will continue to have regular meetings to ensure they are well represented.

We have also reviewed a draft policy which will provide the framework for Government to collaborate with the private sector to explore new species, so that we can ascertain the abundance of these species such as tuna and sea cucumber and thereafter establish management regimes for them to facilitate their sustainable development.

CRFM and International Fisheries Organizations

As a region, there is a need for greater collaboration through organizations like the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM).

Officials from the CRFM have been present at these discussions over the last few days and they have highlighted the need for Jamaica to consider membership in a number of international fishing organizations, including the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC). Membership in these organizations will allow us access to migratory fish species and assist with the fight against Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The Ministry is to examine agreements with these organizations for possible membership.

Illegal Unregulated and Unreported Fishing

Given the concerns in relation to illegal fishing, we have reviewed the results of a feasibility study for the use of drones to enhance surveillance in Jamaican waters.

This study will be taken to Cabinet in a joint submission with the Ministries of National Security and Transport as the use of drones will not only benefit fisheries but the country's national security as well.

Additionally, diplomatic overtures will be made to the Governments of Honduras and Nicaragua and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will be engaged for Jamaica to express its concerns.

Pedro Cays

We have also received a draft management regime for the Pedro Cays which outlines the measures which have been taken so far to deal with human and solid

waste. Waste will be collected from the cays this weekend and clean-up activities will take place on a monthly basis going forward.