

# Aquaculture Networking in the Americas RedLAC/ANA

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The concept of a network of aquaculture centres or a cooperation network for the development of aquaculture in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has been of interest for the countries of the region since long ago and much effort has been devoted to the establishment of a sustainable regional cooperation mechanism for the development of aquaculture in the region among which, to mention a few, include: (i) the Regional Programme for the Development of Aquaculture in Latin America and the Caribbean (AQUILA) executed between 1986 and 1994, (ii) the sessions of the Latin American Inland Fisheries Commission (COPESCAL) held during over a decade which have discussed this subject and (iii) several other FAO-sponsored meetings and workshops held in the region since 1990. Other regional fishery cooperation agencies, such as the Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development or OLDEPESCA, have also dealt with this subject. Two more recent initiatives have taken the floor recently, in 2004 and 2005, respectively. One was a potential FAO network and the other originated from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) + 2 countries (Asia-Pacific countries plus Brazil and Ecuador) initiative.

The Tenth Session of COPESCAL in 2005 recognized that the FAO and APEC initiatives do not replace each other but could be complementary. The session recommended that if APEC countries in Latin America quickly agreed to the establishment of the network initially promoted by APEC, the so called ANA (Aquaculture Network for the Americas), FAO should endeavor to make institutional arrangements to assist the ANA network in order to secure that countries which were not able to be members of it could access, through FAO, to the benefits of the ANA network.

To date, the lack of commitment by the countries and the difficulties of identifying donors interested in supporting aquaculture regional cooperation have impeded the establishment of a network or a regional mechanism in a sustainable manner. Therefore, considerations should be given to new principles and ideas, to the effective commitment of the countries to contribute funds for the maintenance of the network.



*Regional Review of Aquaculture Development Trends In Latin America and the Caribbean*

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Efforts made during the last 20 years are a clear indication that regional cooperation for the development of aquaculture is important and of interest to the countries in the region. Aquaculture in the Americas effectively contributed to the economic growth of various countries of the region, has a definite potential for poverty alleviation in deprived regions and has contributed to national objectives such as food security in rural areas. Thus, all efforts should be made to establish a regional cooperation network for the development of this important activity for the region.