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## Summary Notes

**Title:** Stakeholder Meeting: Investment Plan for the Development of Climate Resilient Fisheries Infrastructure in Grand Bahama and Abaco Islands

**Date:** Thursday 25 November 2021 (virtual 10 AM-12 PM)

**Meeting purpose:**

- 1) Create awareness among key stakeholders on the state of the fishery infrastructure on Grand Bahama and Abaco.
- 2) Present and discuss the draft Investment Plan for the Development of Climate Resilient Fisheries Infrastructure in Grand Bahama and Abaco Islands.
- 3) Discuss the next steps for finalizing the plan and finding investors.

**Attendance:** 21 stakeholders attended the meeting. The list of participants can be found in Annex A

**Programme:** the meeting programme is presented in Annex B

**Information:** the background information for the meeting was shared 2 days before the meeting via e-mail and online at: <https://www.fao.org/fishing-safety/news-events/events/detail/en/c/1457010/>

**Project:** Rebuilding fisheries livelihoods in Abaco and Grand Bahama islands following Hurricane Dorian (TCP/BHA/3703)

**Moderator:** Ms Tamanji Bethel

1. **Opening:** The participants were welcomed by Mr Crispim Moreira – FAO Representative to Bahamas, Belize and Jamaica. He referred to the good collaboration between the DMR and FAO in implementing the Technical cooperation project on Abaco and Grand Bahama islands. He also emphasized the importance of investment in climate change resilient infrastructure for fisheries. He mentioned that the small-scale fishers in the Bahamas are important for the country and that 2022 is the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAF 2022).
2. **Project background** was provided by Mr Raymon van Anrooy, informing the stakeholders that the project had distributed an innovative model of lobster condos (3,750 in total) to fishers, as well as some spare parts (for outboard motors) and freezers. The procurement of fish pot construction materials for distribution to fishers has taken place and training on fish pot construction and distribution are scheduled for 26-27 November in Grand Bahama and within 2 weeks in Abaco. Mr Caswelt Mounts is the trainer and the training is organized by DMR and FAO. The project also carried out a Post Disaster Damage and Needs Assessment of the Fisheries Sector in The Bahamas, of which the report was submitted to the Government in April 2020.

3. An overview of the **fishery infrastructure inventory** done on Grand Bahama and Abaco was presented by Mr Jo Sciortino, FAO fisheries infrastructure consultant, who showed the status of the infrastructure, explained what type of infrastructure is climate change resilient and what not, and how infrastructure is impacted by climate change. The inventory was made with support from Tamanji Bethel, and L'Dina Pelicanos and Jeremie Saunders of the DMR.
4. Mr Jo Sciortino presented the **Draft Investment Plan for the Development of Climate Resilient Fisheries Infrastructure in Grand Bahama and Abaco Islands** in which plans were outlined for investment in two climate proof fish buying stations, concrete piers/jetties on rock, timber piers, marginal quays, and concrete slipways, with a focus on Grand Bahama. The estimated total investment required for Grand Bahama would be around USD 6.3 million to make the infrastructure climate proof for the coming 50 years. Additional information from stakeholders in Abaco could further improve the investment plan.
5. Honourable Minister Clay Glenford Sweeting expressed his **support for innovation and modernization** in the fishery sector. He mentioned that the fishery grounds around Grand Bahama and Abaco are good. Joint efforts are needed to make the sector and fishery infrastructure on the islands more sustainable and economically viable in view of the climate change challenges. The proposed investment plan contains **viable options** that should be considered by the Bahamian Government.
6. The discussion session included the following topics:
  - a. The need for a **live lobster holding tank** in the proposed new fish buying stations. Currently only 5% of lobsters is landed alive and that most product is landed as tails only in fresh or frozen form. The increase of live lobster landing would contribute to increased value, as there is a demand from the tourism industry and in export markets. In Grand Bahama there are exporters interested in live lobster. Investment by fishers in holding tanks on their vessels will also be required for this value chain.
  - b. Installation of an **industrial freezer** in the fish buying stations was proposed as well. This would also be possible, but would require additional investment in insulation of the cold store room and the needed electrical power is expensive. Fresh on ice, with a small flake ice maker in each buying house, would be preferable, as fresh fish has a higher market value. The quality assurance requirements of the Fishery Act (2020) were also discussed.
  - c. The **ownership and management** of the fish buying stations could be arranged through a public-private partnership. The government would build the fish buying stations, issue a competitive tender process for the lease and the fish buyer/middlemen would pay rent for the use, with a renewable contract of 3-5 years. The rent could be used by the government for maintenance of piers or other tasks. The public would benefit from better fresh fish, the fishers from higher prices for good quality product and the fish buyer from having the 1<sup>st</sup> choice of product. There are successful examples of such PPP arrangements for fish buying stations/fish processing sites in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

- d. It was also proposed to invest in **trailer and truck services** in Freeport to transport and store fishing boats from low lying Cays on higher grounds after storm warnings have been given. Many boats were destroyed by Dorian and making this investment to provide shelter/safe storage in a warehouse for fishing boats could be a viable option as well.
- e. **Early warning systems** are functioning well, as fishers get commonly 5 to 10 days warning before a hurricane hits the islands.

7. **Next steps** were outlined for the finalization of the project.

- a. Stakeholders were asked to provide comments on the draft investment plan (available under the link above) before 6 December 2021 to [raymon.vananrooy@fao.org](mailto:raymon.vananrooy@fao.org) . FAO will aim to submit a final draft plan for consideration to the DMR and Minister by January 2022.
- b. The project terminal report will be submitted to the Minister in January 2022.
- c. Suggestions for follow-up projects are welcomed, recognizing that FAO is a technical assistance agency and not a funding agency.
- d. Government investment would be logical for sector sustainability, as the fishery sector alone in Grand Bahama and Abaco contributes annually more than 20 million USD to the national economy. Hurricane related income losses could be reduced by the investment in climate proof infrastructure. Investment would be in line with the National Policy for Adaptation to Climate Change (2005) and the 2015 national adaptation communication. There may be other options for funding, such as the Green Climate Fund, Caribbean Development Bank, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank.

8. The **meeting closure** was done by Mr Gregory Bethel, Director of the DMR. He thanked the participants, colleagues, experts and FAO for supporting the project. He mentioned that the option of public-private partnerships for the investment in climate resilient fisheries infrastructure deserves consideration.

**Annex A****List of participants**

Mr Clay Glenford Sweeting	Minister for Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family island affairs
Mr Crispim Moreira	FAO representative in the Bahamas, Belize and Jamaica
Mr Gregory Bethel	Director of the Department of Marine Resources (DMR)
Ms L'Dina Pelicanos	DMR
Mr Jeremie Saunders	DMR
Mr Amos Weatherford	Fisherman Abaco
Ms Felicity Burrows	TNC representative
Ms Gennera Miller	Permanent Secretary Office representative
Mr Lenardo Lightbourne	Permanent Secretary Office representative
Mr Frits Thompson	Fisherman Sweeting's Cay
Ms Danielle Gibson	Minister Clay Sweeting Private Aid
Mr Rolle	Grand Bahama Fisherman
Mr Anjoun Armaly	Arma Seafood
Ms Jeri Leah Kelly	Ministry Liaison/FAO correspondent
Mr Jo Sciortino	FAO Fisheries Infrastructure expert
Ms Tamanji Bethel	FAO national consultant
Ms Iris Monnereau	FAO CC4Fish coordinator
Mr Raymon van Anrooy	FAO Senior fishery officer
Three more participants	Fishers and fish house representatives – names not received

**Annex B****Meeting programme**

Time	Programme
10.00 -10.10	Welcome by FAO - Mr Crispim Moreira
10.10 -10.20	Introduction of Participants
10.20 -10.30	Short introduction to the project – Mr Raymon van Anrooy
10.30 -10.45	Fishery Infrastructure Inventory – Mr Jo Sciortino
10.45 -11.00	Draft Investment Plan for the Development of Climate Resilient Fisheries Infrastructure - Mr Jo Sciortino
11.00 -11.10	Remarks by Hon. Minister Clay Glenford Sweeting
11.10 -11.40	Discussion – Questions & Answers
11.40 -11.50	Next steps – moderated discussion – Mr Raymon van Anrooy
11.50 -11.55	Closing words – Mr Gregory Bethel