



## **Latin American and Caribbean countries meet to discuss how to improve the management and sustainability of the exploitation of sea cucumber**

Havana, Cuba, 30 April 2014 – Over 50 experts from 14 countries met in Cuba to share experiences and move forward on the sustainable management of sea cucumber exploitation. The situation of sea cucumber fisheries in the region was presented, with special attention to the fact that sea cucumber trade is the driver of overexploitation – and is usually carried out illegally.

The group addressed the geographical development of sea cucumber trade and its expansion from an area closer to the main consuming markets (namely China), throughout the other producing regions. The Caribbean was noted as the last region remaining to develop trade. However, in the last two years, this region has also been reached by international traders, resulting in sea cucumber overexploitation. Given the sedentary nature and life-history characteristics of the species make sea cucumber vulnerable to overexploitation. Participants underscored that the key drivers of sustainability are the importance of developing management plans that are appropriate to the capacity of the responsible agency and the role of enforcement.

Recent developments of sea cucumber aquaculture were presented: in particular, the challenges faced by aquaculture facilities, the possibilities for multispecies aquaculture and the need to set realistic goals before venturing into sea cucumber aquaculture in the Caribbean.

The workshop adopted the *Resolution on sea cucumber fisheries management and aquaculture*, to be submitted to the WECAFC for consideration. This resolution recommends the following activities:

1. Biological research on the life cycle characteristics and the reproductive biology of the commercially interesting species, including size at sexual maturity, longevity, recruitment and growth rate;
2. Development of aquaculture technologies of native species applying a precautionary approach;
3. Study of the socio-economic aspects of the fishing communities and the stakeholders in the value chain;
4. Monitoring of the fisheries of sea cucumber and combating of illegal fishing and trade;
5. Research on the development of new products, including pharmaceutical uses, and the utilization of by-products;
6. Marketing research and monitoring of international sea cucumber trade dynamics;
7. Strengthening the monitoring and controls by international, regional, national and local authorities;

8. Preparation and implementation of management plans applying the Ecosystem Approach on Fisheries;
9. Data collection on captures, prices, processing and foreign trade;
10. Capacity building on all the above mentioned topics;



11. Joint coordination of the efforts in the framework of the WECAFC;
12. Identification of funding from governments, regional and international organizations, for the implementation of effective actions on the points of this resolution.

*Photo of workshop participants*