



Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources

Sandy Ground • Anguilla • British West Indies
Tel. 264 497 2871/ 264 497 8705 • Fax. 264 497 8567
fisheriesmr@gov.ai • james.gumbs@gov.ai

PRESS RELEASE

INTERPOL Fisheries Enforcement Conference and Fisheries Crime Working Group Meeting

Anguillian delegates return from INTERPOL Fisheries Enforcement conference.

The International Crime Police Organization (INTERPOL) is the largest international police organization in the world. It consists of 190 member states that collaborate to fight crime. One of the latest initiatives being undertaken by INTERPOL in its efforts to fight crime is 'Project Scale.' It is being undertaken by INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Programme to combat fisheries crime. Project Scale was launched at the first ever INTERPOL International Fisheries Enforcement conference, which was held on 26th February 2013 at the General Secretariat Headquarters in Lyon, France. This high level meeting had delegates from sixty three different countries and over two hundred participants.

Through funding from the British Government Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Ms. Kafi Gumbs and Mr. Samuel Webster from the Ministry of Home Affairs attended this meeting, followed by a two day working group meeting on fisheries crime from the 27th-28th February 2013. The presence of Anguilla delegates at these meetings was very beneficial, as the aims of the project were directly useful to the island. Some of the aims were to raise awareness concerning fisheries crimes; establish a system that would ensure institutionalized cooperation between national agencies and international partners; assess the needs of vulnerable member countries to effectively combat fisheries crimes; and to conduct operations to suppress crime, disrupt trafficking routes, and to ensure the enforcement of national legislation.

Throughout the meetings, and in social settings the Anguilla delegates took every opportunity to share some of the problems facing Anguilla's fishing industry, its' needs for development and diversification, and potential problems with suspected illegal fishing within Anguilla's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Ideas on different fishing strategies, fisheries developments and stock assessment needs were shared in a brief meeting organized between the Anguilla and Norwegian delegates.

Three of the most substantial outcomes for Anguilla from these meetings, were that the Anguilla delegates were able to lobby for support from the British Navy to assist in patrols and capacity building for boarder protection agents including the Marine Police and Department of Fisheries staff; begin communications with Norway on best practices pertaining to feasibility studies for the development of Anguilla fishing industry and for the establishment of a fish processing plant for the island and learn of funding agencies and build relationships between

those agencies and other special donors that would be willing to support fisheries/environmental projects in Anguilla.

Being present at the meetings was a unique experience as Anguilla was the only Caribbean island represented. However, at the same time it was a bit worrisome, because a project of such a large scale needs world wide support and recognition. If the region is to benefit, it cannot do it island by island, because of the close bounded nature of the EEZ's in the region.

One of the concerns raised by the Anguilla delegates was the absence of other Caribbean islands and what efforts are going to be made to get them on board. As project Scale represents the perfect opportunity to fight piracy, illegal fisheries crimes and the trafficking of drugs under the pretence of fishing throughout the Caribbean region.

Thanks is extended to JNCC and the Overseas Anguilla London Office for making Anguilla's presence at those meeting possible.

Kafi S. Gumbs
Deputy Director of Fisheries and Marine Resources
6, March 2013