

## Guyana's per-capita fish consumption highest in CARICOM countries

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Guyana's per capita consumption of fish locally is approximately 57kg which is the highest among CARICOM Countries. In fact, Guyana on average is amongst the highest consumers of fish in the world, Gary Baird, Head of Legal and Inspectorate Unit stated.

He made those remarks yesterday at Fisherfolk Open Day held at the Guyana Fisheries Limited Wharf. The country's fishing industry is expanding with contributions from marine fishing and aquaculture.

According to Baird, the sector contributes approximately 3 percent to national Gross Domestic Product, with a growth of 7.4 percent from 2009 to 2010.

He added that in terms of aquaculture, a total of 288 metric tonnes were produced and a total of 476,200 kg of seafood were exported.

It was revealed that Guyana's marine fishery sector is broken down into industrial, semi-industrial and artisanal fishery. There are also processors and exporters. In 2010, 89% of the industrial vessels were licensed while in the semi industrial sector 37 of the 77 vessels (47%) on register were licensed. Baird added that in the artisanal sector, 164 vessels out of an estimated 1,200 operational vessels (13%) were licensed. In terms of processing plants, of the 29 plants on register, six were not licensed which was due mainly to them not being operational.

He stated that the United States and the Caribbean are Guyana's main export markets. Several years ago, Guyana's exports to the US were restricted due to non-compliance with Turtle Exclusion Devices regulations that were implemented by the US. This restriction led to the implementation of regulations for the use of Turtle Exclusion Devices locally, which is a requirement for all trawlers operating locally. "Similarly, the European Union (EU) has implemented an 'Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported' fishery regulation which require all exporters to comply with a catch certificate scheme in order to access European markets," Baird stated.

Lystra Fletcher-Paul, Representative of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FOA) stated that the world's fish reserves are depleting and acknowledged Guyana is making great efforts to manage its fish stock and contribute towards the increase in its fish population.

She noted that, "This increase in fish stock will also contribute to the Agricultural Sector and to Food Security of Guyana. In addition, inland fisheries and aquaculture will also play a role in the Low Carbon Development Strategy."

Meanwhile, FAO has been providing support to the fisheries sector of Guyana for over 20 years – in the areas such as institutional strengthening, Fish Stock Assessment and Aquaculture.

"We are currently assisting in the development of an inland Fisheries Policy. A few weeks ago, we brought two consultants to Guyana to assess the fish stock assessment system and provide training in this area. Soon, we will be providing additional assistance to develop a Regulatory System for Inland Fisheries and to develop an Inland Fisheries Policy," she stated.