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OPENING SESSION

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CONFERENCE

P. M. Roedel – *Co-Chairman*

I will open this Conference on the Development of Small-Scale Fisheries in the Caribbean Region by giving you some background on the genesis of the meeting and then a rather broad statement of what your conference co-chairman (Frank Williams and myself) hope to achieve over the next two days. The conference is co-sponsored by the University of Miami (GCFI) and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Until 2 or 3 years ago the interest of AID in fisheries was rather minimal but through a variety of circumstances the Agency decided to expand its program, which for the preceding several years had been devoted almost exclusively to tropical fresh-water aquaculture. The broadening of interest led to a consideration of small-scale fisheries' needs and to an examination of the whole fisheries system – if you will – everything that happens from the time you go fishing till the time someone eats or refuses to eat (for whatever reason) your catch.

My affiliation is with the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and I am presently on secondment to AID to assist in the development of policies and programs in fisheries. About 2 years ago we were looking for ways of highlighting AID's new attention to this area. I had been talking with Frank Williams on a variety of fisheries topics related to the Caribbean region and it appeared that it could be extremely useful to both organizations (USAID and GCFI) jointly to hold a conference on small-scale fisheries and that conversation has led to our being here today. Thus the program has been approximately 2 years in its development, for *ad hoc* conferences do not grow overnight, and they require an unbelievable amount of advance planning. Frank Williams and I did not put this Conference together without a great deal of assistance from a number of people. I think many of you sitting here today played major roles in offering suggestions for topics that would be worthy of discussion. I would like to mention specifically Winston Miller, Harvey Bullis, and Jim Higman who served with Frank Williams and me as a Steering Committee to develop the program.

Since arriving here several people have asked me "what is a small-scale fishery?" I have been unable to provide a succinct definition probably because small-scale fisheries are somewhat in the eye of the beholder, and a small-scale fishery in one man's view is a large-scale fishery in another man's. The definition also varies from region to region and from country to country within these regions. However, several years ago, in the early days of AID's expanded fisheries' program, we did prepare an AID definition which we presented at a conference in November 1975 sponsored by OECD, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Let me read from our presentation¹ –there is nothing sacred about it but it can perhaps serve as a guideline that you may wish us to use or modify in some way, to reflect things in your area more truly. I quote: "This definition excludes fisheries ventures of a capital intensive nature, so the development of high seas or distant water fleets lies outside of AID's purview. In the AID context we are talking about largely rural inland and coastal fishermen in the poorest of the developing countries whose catch goes largely for human consumption, who are themselves poor, and who fish with relatively unsophisticated gear and vessels in nearshore marine waters or in the freshwater environment. There is of course a continuum between small and large-scale fisheries and, in the absence of an accepted global definition, the dividing point is arbitrary. AID, however, is devoting its attention to the lower end of the spectrum. The AID definition does not exclude fisheries ventures aimed at high value products for either the domestic or the tourist trade, if they have substantial employment-generating effects. However, the priority is on fish production as a source of relatively low-cost protein and as a source of employment." This definition incidentally is quite close to that which has been employed by FAO in recent years.

Now, what do we, Frank Williams and I, and our parent organizations, the University of Miami and AID, really hope to bring about as a result of this meeting? What we hope for is your best collective judgement as to the problems impeding the development of small-scale fisheries in the Caribbean region. We hope to get from you some sense of priorities and some sense of who might best be able to assist in reaching solutions to the problems. In this latter area the field is wide open, and possible sources are, I think, fairly obvious – interregional or regional banks; private foundations; FAO/UNDP, particularly the WECAF program here in the Caribbean; bilateral donors such as AID; individual countries themselves or groups of countries working in consortia; and the private sector. Principally, I think we would like to leave here with a sense of true accomplishment and the knowledge that this session of the GCFI will in fact lead to development of small-scale fisheries in the Caribbean. We will then be able to look back upon it a few years hence with a sense of true satisfaction that this meeting led to something real in the real world.

¹ Roedel, P. M. The bilateral assistance program of the United States for small-scale fisheries, p. 96-104. *In* Economic state and problems of small-scale fisheries, OECD, Paris, 1976.

F. Williams – *Co-Chairman*

When we were planning this Conference, the Steering Committee wanted to invite a speaker who we believed could provide us with a very broad review of what small-scale fisheries really mean to the Caribbean region in a historical, cultural, sociological, and economic sense. We were very fortunate, therefore, in obtaining as our keynote speaker, Dr. Julian Kenny, Chairman of the Department of Zoology of the University of West Indies at St. Augustin, Trinidad. Dr. Kenny has been associated with the University for the last 14 years. He is primarily interested in aquatic sciences and tells me this morning that his current interest is in coral reef communities which are under stress. However, I think it is important for you to know that before he went to the University, Dr. Kenny was the Senior Fisheries Officer for Trinidad and Tobago. He is still extremely interested in fisheries and teaches the subject. He was educated at the undergraduate level at the University of Toronto in Canada and then received his Doctorate at the University of London in England. It is a very distinct pleasure for me to introduce Dr. Kenny who will give his keynote address on the historical, nutritional, sociological, and economic importance of fishing to countries in the Caribbean region.