

## MINISTRY PAPER 3/2017

### LOBSTER FISHERY REGIME FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE CARIBBEAN SPINY LOBSTER (PANULIRUS ARGUS) IN JAMAICA

#### 1.0 Purpose

The matter for Tabling is an update on the new lobster fishery regime for the management and sustainable use of the Caribbean Spiny Lobster (*panulirus argus*) in Jamaica to be undertaken in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAF).

#### 2.0 Background

The fisheries sector has been a major means of livelihood for thousands of Jamaicans for many years, and contributes significantly to economic growth and also plays an important role in ensuring the availability of nutritious, affordable and accessible source of food. In 2014, based on data from the Statistical Institute data, the Fishing Industry in Jamaica contributed J\$2,212 million to the Gross Domestic Product (or 0.30% of GDP). Total exports amounted to 833.6 Metric Tonnes, valued at US\$ 12.6 million in 2014. The spiny lobster fishery, which is primarily export-oriented, is the second most commercially valuable fishery in Jamaica (after the Queen Conch).

The spiny lobster fisheries makes an important contribution to food and nutrition security, employment, international trade, and the economic and social well-being of the people of Jamaica. The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries is thus concerned that the long-term sustainable use and contribution of the spiny lobster fishery to Jamaica's social and economic development and food security is being threatened by illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. There is also the need to strengthen the conservation and management of the resource and its habitats. Consequently, this Regime was established to enhance the mechanism with respect to the issuance of Lobster Fishery Licences, as well as the conservation, protection, management and long-term sustainable use of the spiny lobster and its habitats for the benefit of present and future generations.

#### 3.0 Current Regime

The existing regime has several challenges as it relates to transparency, accountability and attracting additional and much needed investment into the industry. The current system was not development or investment friendly for the following reasons:

- The licence was only valid for one year; this made it very difficult for any proper investment to be made in the industry. This was also similar for the valuation of the various assets which are used to granting the lobster licence.
- There was not a proper consultative mechanism that guided the Licensing Authority.
- The process was not seen to have been granted on a systematic basis but more on a first come first served basis. This in effect acted as a barrier to entry for potential new investors in the industry.
- The current regime in of itself, did not effectively provide for the structured inclusion of artisanal fishers who play a critical role in the lobster industry.

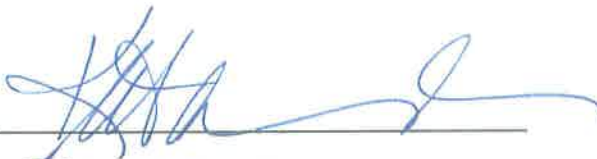
- The process will be equitable and give priority consideration to the management and sustainable use of the precious resource.

#### 4.0 Features of the New Regime

The Minister having examined the current Lobster Licencing Regime, gave a commitment in 2016 to review the process in an effort to make it more transparent, development and investment friendly. This new regime has been developed with the active participation of the various stakeholders within the Jamaican lobster industry. The new regime will also encourage greater investment in the acquisition of more industrial fishing vessels, market development and greater research and development. The new regime will become effective on the first of July 2017. The features of the new regime are as follows:

- The Lobster Licence will now be valid for a period of two (2) years. This will allow for greater business planning and investment.
- The new regime has expanded the categories of lobster licence from two (2) to four (4). These are:
  - Category A- Industrial Fishing
  - Category B- Artisanal Fishing
  - Category C – Carriers/Transportation of Lobsters
  - Category D – Research and Scientific
- There will be an Advisory Committee in place to assist the Licensing Authority.
- A systematic evaluation and selection criteria based process has been developed and will now be used in the granting of all future lobster licences. This will allow the process to be more transparent, objective and equitable.
- There will be a clear schedule of procedure that will aid in reducing significantly the waiting time for granting the various lobster licences. This will increase the scope for the vessels to be underway by the first of July.
- The new regime places a greater emphasis on tangible investment rather than the historical involvement of the applicant.

It is expected that this new lobster licencing regime will increase the number of licences, attract new investments, cause greater utilization of the entire Pedro Bank, and create additional jobs within the sector all in keeping with the principle of transparency, accountability and sustainable use of this precious resource.



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