



## **Agency for Public Information**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

The Blue Marine's Foundation is currently spearheading a project that would benefit the fisheries industry here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Baseline assessment project is a funded initiative by the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Environment Fund (SVGEF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The project was launched on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at the Beachcombers Hotel Conference room.

The Baseline Assessment study will examine the general biodiversity of fish in the waters of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with the main focus being on conchs and lobsters.

Local fisher folks and divers would be receiving training over a three-week period, The training would be headed by senior project director of Blue Marine foundation Dr. Judith Brown.

Brown said that they would engaging with the local stakeholders where they could highlight the difficulties and other opportunities that could derived from the industry.

She also mentioned that her team would commence diving on Union Island on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to conduct a survey on conch around the island, with such survey done a comparison would be made with the survey that was done in 2013. Brown said that the same would be conducted around the island of Bequia and another comparison would be made but this time it would be made between two islands.

Dr. Brown stressed the importance of having the local conchs and lobsters divers involved in the survey so that they can identify some of the areas that they think the survey should be done.

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Hon Saboto Caesar expressed many thanks to the organization for partnering with the ministry and stated that many families especially those involved in the fisheries sector would benefit greatly from this project.

Minister Caesar reminded the audience that due to many partnerships from investors with his ministry, there have been tremendous growth in the sector. He went on to reiterate the complete band on the harvesting of turtles and parrot fish will help the species to revive. There is also a maximum and minimum catch when comes to lobster.

Senior Fisheries Officer Kris Isaacs said the survey would help to chart the way forward for the fisheries sector and help the policy makers to make informed decisions based on scientific evidence.