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UBEC Advances Seafood Safety Modernisation in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Efforts to strengthen seafood safety, quality inspection and export readiness in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have advanced with the completion of a four-day consultation led by Seafood Sanitary Consultant Helder DaSilva under the Unleashing the Blue Economy of the Caribbean (UBEC) Project.

The consultations were held during the period 21st – 24th September and formed part of DaSilva's final mission to the country for the development of a Five-Year Seafood Sanitary and Inspection Services Development Plan.

It follows an earlier visit by DaSilva in June 2026, during which he conducted assessments and engaged stakeholders across the fisheries sector. That work examined areas including sanitary controls, legislation, inspection capacity, laboratory services, seafood establishments, landing sites and fishing operations.

During his latest mission, DaSilva held three days of technical discussions with Fisheries officials, followed by a wider stakeholder session involving representatives from Government and private industry.

DaSilva said the final session generated strong discussion on the future modernisation of seafood safety and quality in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, including the requirements associated with accessing the European market.

He noted that participants were actively involved in identifying the challenges, needs and practical difficulties that would have to be addressed as the country strengthens its system.

Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine and Land Conservation and Climate Resilience, Giselle Myers, said the five-year plan provides the country with a practical strategy for strengthening seafood sanitary and quality inspection services.

According to Myers, the plan combines an assessment of the existing system with a proposed framework for official controls and a phased approach to implementation.

"The five-year Seafood Sanitary and Inspection Services Development Plan is a valuable roadmap for building a safer, more credible competitive seafood sector," Myers said.

She noted that legislative reform, stronger inspection procedures, staff training, improved food-safety controls and reliable monitoring would help ensure that seafood sold locally is handled safely, while also laying the groundwork for future trade opportunities.

UBEC Fisheries Specialist, Risha Alleyne said Fisheries has now been provided with a roadmap to guide improvements to quality inspection services and strengthen the country's competent authority over the next five years.

Alleyne said a major long-term objective of the Ministry and UBEC is for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to work towards re-entry into the European Union market for fish and fish products.

She acknowledged that the process will take time but said the consultations have helped identify a pathway forward, supported by continued commitment from Government and private-sector stakeholders.

Ezron John, Manager of the Kingstown Fish Market, Division of the Agriculture Input Warehouse, said the consultation provided greater clarity on policy and the concrete actions that could be pursued over the next six months to two years.

John said improvements to the facility would support greater seafood safety for local consumers while also contributing to the country's preparations for international export markets.

Meanwhile, Dr. Maren Headley, Programme Manager for Fisheries Management and Development with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat, described the session as comprehensive in outlining a way forward for improving seafood standards, inspection and traceability.

She said strengthening these areas could improve Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' competitiveness in the global market, contribute to development of the Blue Economy and potentially provide useful lessons for other CRFM Member States.

With DaSilva's final mission completed, attention now turns to implementation of the five-year roadmap.

The initiative is expected to support stronger seafood safety for Vincentian consumers while progressively strengthening the systems, institutions and industry practices required for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to pursue expanded regional and international market opportunities.