

Owia Fisheries Centre Opens

April 14, 2009

The Owia Fisheries Centre was opened today constructed at a cost of \$EC 33million and funded by Japan.

Permanent Secretary (Ag), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Allan Alexander expressed gratitude to the Government of Japan for the grant to construct the Centre.

Alexander added that with the global economic crisis, the role of Agriculture and Fisheries is becoming more vital to economic sustainability therefore, he expects the facility will help to upgrade the Fishing Industry and improve standards of living in North Windward. He noted that with the addition of a new fuel station to the facility, fishermen would no longer have to travel the tedious journey to Georgetown to purchase fuel.

Chief Fisheries Officer, Raymond Ryan, said: "The Owia Fisheries Centre would create employment opportunities thereby helping to it alleviate poverty in the community and also enhance food security. He also said it would provide a viable link for the tourism industry and will also serve as a port for emergency.



Ryan noted that storm conditions affected the proposed location of the complex and made it very challenging to construct the facility therefore careful planning was undertaken."

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Resident Representative Norio Yonezaki said the Owia Fisheries Centre represents a new era in the life of the people of the community. He wished the fisher folks and people of the Owia Community great success.

"The size of the facility is beyond my comprehension" those were the words echoed by Tatsuaki Iwata - Japanese Ambassador to the Caribbean. Iwata urged the people to make use of the facility for the economy of this country and the region."

The Centre was constructed in two phases, with the first being the Jetty which was successfully completed on the 31st March 2009. The second phase included the construction of the Breakwater.

The Centre houses a Jetty and Breakwater, Slipway, Fisher's Lockers, Office Quarters, Ice making Machine, Cold and Chill, Storage Facilities and Fuel Station. The newly established Owia Fish Marketing Company would manage the Centre.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Area Representative and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Hon. Montgomery Daniel said having heard the cries of the fishermen in the area he was pleased to present to the people, The Owia Fisheries Centre.

Daniel said the facility is a beacon in the community and is one of the best in the Caribbean.

He said lockers would be available to fishermen via a contract by the fishermen and the company. Minister Daniel said all the fishermen landing would be weighed and charged a fee. He further stated that a fee would also be charged for the storage of fish which wouldn't be sold to the company.

Minister Daniel said all fishing necessities, (lubricating oils, life jackets, hooks, lines) would be sold on the compound. In addition to fuel for boats, LPG Cooking Gas and ice would also be sold on the compound. He said the Centre would be available to boats and public vehicles.

Daniel said "Security would be very critical because we have to secure a \$33 million complex."

Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Dr. Hon Ralph E. Gonsalves in his feature address said careful planning was undertaken to decide the circumstances under which to construct this facility. He said the basis for the facility is to preserve fish catch. He said it is important for food security.

Prime Minister Gonsalves said since Owia is the second highest fish landing area in the country, producing approximately 2259lbs of fish on a daily average, the project was necessary and viable.

He said the Owia Fisheries Centre will help to diversify the economy; therefore there was a need to construct this facility. "Money is here to be made and made honestly now that we put this facility" said Dr. Gonsalves. He said the government would lend support to persons who are interested in setting up small business there.

Dr. Gonsalves said the complex would provide jobs for many. He thanked the Government of Japan for providing the grant for the complex. He said the Centre would be managed by the newly established Owia Fish Marketing Company.

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