

Colombia plans to amend fishery laws to increase the country's potential

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Mrs. Marcela Urueña Gomez, Deputy Minister of Agricultural Affairs said during the meeting of the Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO) that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Authority of National Aquaculture and Fisheries (AUNAP) are working together within the legal framework to increase the potential for fishery and aquaculture of the country. The objective is to make the sector to become a business sector that creates jobs for the people and drives the economic growth of Colombia, as well as, to encourage sustainable use of the fishery and aquaculture resources of the country.

The plan to amend the law is intended to strengthen the procedure of formalization, laws and planning of fishery and aquaculture activities, information creation for decision making and design of public policies, including establishment of conditions for the growth of aquaculture and mariculture, in order to create jobs and income for the sector. It is also expected to improve the laws to be in line with the government plan under the leadership of President Ivan Duque that emphasizes equality, legality and entrepreneurship.

Mr. Nicolas del Castillo, the director of AUNAP, said that currently there are approximately 260 million fishermen in the country, but only 65,000 of them have been registered. Therefore, the government plans to create a system issuing identifications for fishermen in order to build credibility and turn them to be the guardians of the diversity of domestic fishery. Additionally, it is proposed to expedite the issuance of permits as well as generate free of charge for the benefit of both artisanal fishermen and small-scale or artisanal aquaculture.

Deputy Minister Urueña also pointed out about the articulation between the plan and the National Production Plan, which gives priority to the fishery and aquaculture sector. This plan is expected to moderate the production cycle of various business sectors not to have oversupply or shortage of products, reduce the uncertainty of prices, and create conditions that are beneficial to both the producers and the end consumers.

In addition, the Deputy Minister also convinced the Colombians to consume more fish by pointing out that currently Colombian people consume an average of 7.9 kilograms of fish per person per year. She hopes that the plan to promote the fishery business will help increase the average fish consumption rate of the Colombians to the equivalent of the international rate of approximately 18 to 20 kilograms.

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