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A NEW INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE FISHING AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR IN PANAMA

ARAP

Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama



On November 23 President Martin Torrijos, accompanied by the Minister of Agricultural Development, Lic. Guillermo Salazar, sanctioned the law that creates the new Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP).

The unification of the different governmental offices related with coastal marine resources, aquaculture, fishing and related activities of the public administration, in the new Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) is a positive action for the institutional strengthening of the aquaculture and fishing sector of Panama.

The National Government considers that the creation of this institution will guarantee national and foreign investment to expand the production capacity, generate more employment and more activity for the aquaculture and fishing sector in general.



On the other hand, the exporters consider that the main objective of the new institution is to give technical support to the industrial and small scale fishermen and to the aquaculture producers.

CONAMAR Foundation considers that the new Authority will be fundamental not only in the promotion and development of the fishing and aquaculture sector, but also in promoting the surveillance, follow up and enforcement of the existing legislation and regulatory framework related with the aquatic resources.

One important highlight is that the National Commission for Responsible Fishing has been included as a Consulting and Advisory Body within the ARAP organic structure, which is of great importance as this is a relevant forum where the representatives of the different activities interact with governmental authorities.

Another important aspect of the law is the creation of a special office within the ARAP (Ventanilla Única) , to receive, process and follow up all the applications submitted to the institution.

The scope of ARAP includes a wide range of activities: Research and Development; Inspection, Surveillance and Control; promotion of Productivity and Technical Assistance; and others to be defined in the future by the Executive Branch.

The National Government must demonstrate their political will to give the necessary support to the new institution (qualify and train personnel, budget and equipment), so ARAP can be successful. Additionally ARAP must negotiate the technical assistance necessary for their programs and projects with international organizations.

CONAMAR Foundation expects that this new institution will efficiently contribute in carrying out a sound management policy in order to make better sustainable use of the aquatic resources and ecosystems, as well as to guarantee actual and future investments and employments in the Panamanian fishing and aquaculture sector.