

EDITORIAL

The fisheries sector was the one and only economic sector until tourism started in the early 1970's. Fisheries always provided the highest sectoral employment opportunities and indeed it still does. However, in recent years the number of fishermen has been declining at a rapid rate. Since the beginning of the 1980's almost 50% of the labour force that were involved in the fisheries have moved into other sectors.

The overall performance of the fisheries sector during the planned period, 1985 – 87, did however show satisfactory results. 1985 showed the highest catch records and the sector value added reached record levels. But this did not last for too long. Fisheries have been decline since then.

While we are in the last months of the end of first planned development period we need to think seriously about the future of the fisheries.

In what direction should we move in order to obtain the maximum benefits from fisheries? Should we still continue to develop the tuna fisheries or should we adopt other types of fisheries? Should we provide more participation to the private sector? If so, how can we help the private sector? Do we need to start a fishery in the EEZ?

December is a good month to reflect on the past and to plan for the future. In particular, December 10th, Fishermen's Day, is a special day for the people working in the fisheries sector. It provides an opportunity to establish certain aims and objectives that will sustain our fisheries and help to save those fishermen who are still struggling to maintain a decent standard of living in comparison to workers in the other economic sectors.