



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, CAVE HILL CAMPUS, P.O. BOX 64, BRIDGETOWN BB11000, BARBADOS, W.I.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL & CHEMICAL SCIENCES

Head: Dr. Avril Williams
B.Sc., PhD. (UWI)

Board of Directors
GCFI

Sept 29, 2020

Re: Statement of interest to serve as Chair

Dear Board members,

I would like to express my interest to serve and perform, to the best of my ability, the duties of Chair of the GCFI Board of Directors for the next two years.

My association with the GCFI goes all the way back to 2008, when I attended the GCFI conference in Guadeloupe. Since then, I have attended all the annual meetings (but one) and it is my intention to continue to do so over the upcoming years. As a member of the Board of Directors since 2013, I have been involved in a diverse set of GCFI committees over the years, including the Student Awards Committee, where I have regularly played a particularly active role.

As Chair, I would like to help support the main mission of GCFI, which is to advance the goals of sustainable use, wise management, conservation, and restoration of marine and estuarine fisheries and resources in the Region by providing a forum for the exchange of information and perspectives among decision-makers, scientists, managers, educators, resource users, and students.

To contribute to such vision, I would like to focus on several specific areas. First, I would like to continue supporting the integration of new technologies and new formats into our annual meetings to enrich and diversify our members' experience. The COVID19 pandemic has forced us to think differently about how to continue providing our services and the offerings in our next meeting in November will speak exactly to that. I believe we currently have a great team of people that should help continue building on that experience as we move forward. Second, I would like to explore ways in which we can develop indicators of the impact of GCFI in the region to objectively measure progress in our mission. Third, I would like to explore ways in which we could increase participation from small island states that are typically underrepresented in our meetings such as Haiti, even though they account for large fractions of the total population of fishers in the insular Caribbean. Finally, I would also like to explore ways in which GCFI could use its networks to help identify scholarships for post-graduate studies in marine science disciplines for students coming from developing Caribbean nations. Whereas I appreciate the importance of short-term training, I think there still exist considerable gaps in research capacity between the different Caribbean nations that can only be effectively bridged by building local research capacity at the highest academic level so as to sustain and strengthen regional research networks.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Henri Vallès
Senior Lecturer in Ecology