

Curaçao to develop new sustainable ocean policies

Island will partner with the Waitt Institute as part of Blue Halo Initiative

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WASHINGTON, DC, February 26, 2015 -- Ocean management in the Caribbean will leap forward this year thanks to a new partnership between the government of Curaçao and the Waitt Institute. This collaboration is part of the first wave of geographic expansion of the Institute's Blue Halo Initiative, which started on Barbuda in 2012.

"We're thrilled to be building relationships that emphasize science and community priorities," said Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, executive director of the [Waitt Institute](#), regarding the memoranda of understanding signed with the government. "Barbuda was just the beginning of a Caribbean-wide effort to rebuild fisheries and improve coastal livelihoods."

The [Blue Halo Initiative in Barbuda](#) led to groundbreaking, comprehensive new laws for the coastal waters around the island. Repeating those efforts with [Blue Halo Curaçao](#) will raise the bar for sustainable ocean policy around the world.

"This Initiative is about creating a new status quo for how we use the ocean," said Ted Waitt, Founder and Chairman of the Waitt Institute. "It's challenging. It takes commitment and requires teamwork between government, scientists, fishermen, and the broader community. But if we work together, we can create an elegant solution that will pay benefits for all stakeholders for generations to come. Getting this right is critically important for the Caribbean's food security and way of life."

"Barbuda set a new standard for comprehensive ocean management in the Caribbean," said Johnson. With this initiative expanding, it's an exciting time to be a fish -- and a fisherman -- in these communities."

Honorable Dr. Bernard Whiteman, Minister of Health, Environment and Nature said, "We are convinced that ocean management is the future of our existence, not only for fisheries but for our health. The ocean is something we have to cherish and protect very well."

"The Blue Halo Initiative coming to Curaçao will allow us to design and trial entirely new management approaches to protect Caribbean reefs," remarked Dr. Mark Vermeij, Science Director of Curaçao's [Carmabi Foundation](#).

Mr. Faisal Dilrosun, Senior Advisor on Health, Environment and Nature for the Curaçao government, describes the initiative as "a unique opportunity to create an up-to-date policy for ocean use for the many users, stakeholders and community of Curaçao, which will result in sustainable and responsible use of our marine resources."

The Blue Halo Initiative is at the core of the Waitt Institute's mission to "empower communities to restore their ocean."

Curaçao has one of the healthiest coral reefs in the Caribbean, and this initiative aims to keep it that way. Remarked Johnson, "My heart soars when I envision the Caribbean coastal way of life thriving as a result of the bold commitments these islands have made to use the ocean without using it up."

Additional information and resources:

<http://www.WaittInstitute.org>

Twitter: [@ayanaeliza](#), [@waittinstitute](#)

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Vimeo – general: vimeo.com/waittinstitute

Vimeo – launch video: <https://vimeo.com/waittinstitute/montserratlaunch>

Supporting documents: <http://bit.ly/BlueHalo-2015Launch>

For more information or to set up interviews, contact:

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Bio for Dr. Johnson: Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson is a marine biologist and Executive Director of the [Waitt Institute](#). Johnson’s mission is to collect, create, actualize and amplify the best ideas in ocean conservation. Her work has been featured in the [NY Times](#), on her blog for [National Geographic](#), in [The Atlantic](#), and elsewhere. She holds a Ph.D. from Scripps Institution of Oceanography, a BA from Harvard University in Environmental Science and Public Policy, and has worked on ocean policy at both the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Waitt Institute: The [Waitt Institute](#) endeavors to ensure ecologically, economically, and culturally sustainable use of ocean resources. The Institute partners with governments committed to developing and implementing comprehensive, science-based, community-driven solutions for sustainable ocean management. Our goal is to benefit coastal communities while restoring fish populations and habitats. Our approach is to engage stakeholders, provide the tools needed to design locally appropriate policies, facilitate the policymaking process, and build capacity for effective implementation and long-term success.