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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

2017 Annual Forum with the Fisheries Minister



MAY, 2017

THE
UNIVERSITY
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GRADUATE SCHOOL
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Development
Action Association

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For more information on the Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project, contact:

USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project

Coastal Resources Center

Graduate School of Oceanography

University of Rhode Island

220 South Ferry Rd.

Narragansett, RI 02882 USA

Tel: 401-874-6224 Fax: 401-874-6920 Email: info@crc.uri.edu

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Cover photo: Meeting the Fisheries Minister Hon Naa Aforley Quaye (Development Action Association)

Detailed Partner Contact Information:

USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP)
10 Obodai St., Mempeasem, East Legon, Accra, Ghana

Telephone: +233 0302 542497 Fax: +233 0302 542498

Maurice Knight	Chief of Party	Email: maurice@crcuri.org
Kofi Agbogah	Senior Fisheries Advisor	Email: kagbogah@henmpoano.org
Nii Odenkey Abbey	Communications Specialist	Email: nii.sfmp@crcuri.org
Bakari Nyari	M&E Specialist	Email: hardinyari.sfmp@crcuri.org
Brian Crawford	Project Manager, CRC	Email: brian@crc.uri.edu
Ellis Ekekpi	USAID AOR	Email: eekekpi@usaid.gov

Kofi.Agbogah
kagbogah@henmpoano.org
Stephen Kankam
skankam@henmpoano.org
Hen Mpoano
38 J. Cross Cole St. Windy Ridge
Takoradi, Ghana
233 312 020 701

Resonance Global
(formerly SSG Advisors)
182 Main Street
Burlington, VT 05401
+1 (802) 735-1162
Thomas Buck
tom@ssg-advisors.com

Andre de Jager
adejager@snvworld.org
SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
#161, 10 Maseru Road,
E. Legon, Accra, Ghana
233 30 701 2440

Victoria C. Koomson
cewefia@gmail.com
CEWEFIA
B342 Bronyibima Estate
Elmina, Ghana
233 024 427 8377

Donkris Mevuta
Kyei Yamoah
info@fonghana.org
Friends of the Nation
Parks and Gardens
Adiembra-Sekondi, Ghana
233 312 046 180

Lydia Sasu
daawomen@daawomen.org
DAA
Darkuman Junction, Kaneshie Odokor
Highway
Accra, Ghana
233 302 315894

For additional information on partner activities:

CRC/URI: <http://www.crc.uri.edu>
CEWEFIA: <http://cewefia.weebly.com/>
DAA: <http://womenthrive.org/development-action-association-daa>
Friends of the Nation: <http://www.fonghana.org>
Hen Mpoano: <http://www.henmpoano.org>
Resonance Global: <https://resonanceglobal.com/>
SNV: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/ghana>

ACRONYMS

CCM	Centre for Coastal Management
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CRC	Coastal Resource Center
DAA	Development Action Association
DQF	Daasgift Quality Foundation
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
NAFPTA	National Fish Processors and Traders Association
DOPPA	Densu Oyster Pickers and Processors Association

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The annual forum with the Fisheries Minister is part of an advocacy platform instituted by Development Action Association to interact with policy makers in order to ascertain first-hand information on the laws and regulations regarding fisheries in Ghana and the international community.

For this year's 4th forum, participants were drawn from the Greater Accra, Central and Western regions, Development Action Association (DAA), Central and Western Region Fisheries Improvement Association (CEWEFIA) and DAASGIFT Quality Foundation (DQF).

The Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) is a 5-year food security project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Feed the Future Initiative to support the Government of Ghana/the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development to rebuild small pelagic fisheries stocks (such as herrings, mackerel, anchovies and *sardinella*).

Development Action Association (DAA) is a network of farmers/fishers based organisation operating in 64 communities within four regions of Ghana, namely Greater Accra, Central, Eastern and Ashanti regions. Its members are 95% grassroots women who have very low or no formal education. Its main areas of operation are food security i.e. Fish processing, cassava production, microcredit, vegetable production, fish production and small animals rearing (grasscutter, rabbits, snails, fowls, pigs etc).

CEWEFIA is a women's organisation that focuses on sensitizing and educating communities on illegal methods of fishing, modern fish processing technologies, women empowerment, formal and non-formal education, sexual and reproductive health and human rights issues. This informs rural people and their children about their rights and skills, so as to claim their rights from duty bearers and power sources whenever the need arises. The Association also provides Business Development Services support to fish processors, fishmongers and fish traders.

DAASGIFT Quality Foundation is a financial NGO which seeks to empower the poor and the needy, especially women and youth through facilitation and provision of micro loans, micro business development services, renewable energy and efficient energy solutions, awareness creation on global warming and environmental sustainability education.

1.1 Preparatory Meeting

A preparatory meeting was held with participants at DAA Office in the morning of 24th May 2017 between 9:00 am to 12:00 pm to discuss the issues affecting the industry. The group was divided into regions namely Greater Accra, Central and Western and representatives were selected to speak on behalf of the group during the meeting with the Minister.



Figure 1 Participants from the regions preparing the advocacy content to be presented to the Minister

Each group discussed the problems relating to their region and this was put together into a communique to be presented to the Minister.

2.0 MEETING WITH THE MINISTER AT THE FISHERIES COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM

The annual meeting has provided a platform for the women to get first-hand information on policies affecting their work and also share ideas on the kind of support expected from government.

The women representatives submitted some issues affecting their work in fisheries management; and outlined some of the support received under the USAID/SFMP project which has encouraged them to practise responsible fish processing. A communique summarizing all the issues discussed was presented to the Minister, Hon. Mrs. Elizabeth Aforley Quaye at the end of the proceedings.

The issues were presented as follows.

2.1 Western Region Representatives

Madam Theresa Freeman (Queenmother of Axim), representing fish processors of the Western region, lamented on the adverse effects of light and chemical fishing within their area. Due to these bad practices, women lose revenue from fish processing and sale due to shortened shelf life of products; thus affecting the ability of the women to store abundant fish for the lean season. She acknowledged the work of the Fisheries Commission and their effort to stop this behavior by fishermen but also urged the Ministry to intensify their effort.



Figure 2 Madam Theresa Freeman (standing), Queenmother of Axim making a presentation

Beauty Agbenyega from Anlo Beach congratulated the government for its efforts to curb the galamsey menace. Galamsey activities also affected the water quality along the estuary therefore contributing to loss of mangroves. Lessons learnt from the training received under the USAID/SFMP project showed that fish breed within the mangroves. Efforts are being made to replant mangroves along the estuary at Shama in the Western region, in order to support fish production and replenish fish stock. Unfortunately, some people cut down the mangroves thus destroying the effort by these women. She suggested that the Ministry should institute a law that will prevent people from cutting the mangroves along the beaches to protect the estuary; and also urged the Ministry to use the same strategies and efforts in dealing with the galamsey to solve the mangrove restoration problems along the coast.

2.2 Central Region

The Central region was represented by Madam Florence Nartey from Winneba. Fish processors have gone through different kinds of training in order to improve their work under the USAID/SFMP through DAA, CEWEFIA and DAASGIFT. These include Hygienic and Healthy Fish Handling, Business Skills Training, prevention of Child Labor and Trafficking, introduction of Improved Ovens, all as part of the effort to support and improve the work of fish processors. These women fish processors also make various efforts to educate other fishermen and community members on the lessons learnt from these trainings which have yielded some results. She indicated having been able to convince some few fishermen to stop light fishing, with good success. She pleaded with the Ministry to continue their support to help stop the unapproved methods of fishing in the Ghanaian waters.

Araba Adadzewa from Moree lamented on the way some fish processors and distributors sell out spoilt fish to consumers and other processors. She was formerly selling some of these fish but has stopped due to the training received under the project. One of these is called 'Krodoso' which is spoilt fish that has been soaked in a mixture of monosodium, washing powder and salt. This is a way of disguising the fish attributes so buyers will not be able to identify the poor quality. Such fish is sold at cheaper prices to fish processors who also in turn sell to the general public, thus leading to adverse health risks to consumers. Various efforts to stop fish processors from engaging in these activities have yielded very little results and expectations. She suggested that the Fisheries Ministry and the Commission should

deploy more fisheries officers to these communities and find lasting solutions to these problems.

Madam Judith Aryeetey from Winneba added insight into the ‘Krodoso’ menace. She indicated that the name continues to be changed to different names so buyers will not be able to trace the fact that it is the same kind of fish being referred to. Previously they could store smoked or salted dry fish for not less than six months. But in recent times due to the chemicals used in fish harvesting and processing, fish has shorter shelf life. Consequently, fish processors and marketers sell at cheaper prices during bumper seasons while little is stored for the lean season.

2.3 Greater Accra

Madam Grace Quaye (Fig. 3), President of DAA and also the Greater Accra Regional President of NAFPTA commended the various efforts by the Ministry to curb the IUU menace, institution of canoe embossment, intensification of Navy Patrol on the sea, advancing closed season for the trawlers etc. Members of the three associations, DAA, DAASGIFT and CEWEFIA continue to educate themselves as well as the Fishermen on the need to produce and sell healthy fish to consumers. These have yielded some form of results but more need to be done. Fish processors through the training are able to identify bad fish from good ones which has supported their work. She suggested some few things that the ministry could do to support the efforts of the fish processors which include the following:

- The work of the fisheries watch volunteers need the support of the authorities so they can have the courage and power to execute their job along the shore
- The Chief fishermen should also be supported by the legal authorities to be able to arrest some fishermen who try to disobey the law
- The implementation and enforcement of Fisheries Laws need to be intensified to ensure that culprits are punished.



Figure 3 Grace Quaye, President of DAA making a presentation

Rebecca Donkor from Old Ningo reminded the Minister that as a follow-up to the previous year’s dialogue, the Ministry promised that it will supply and train fish processors on the use of a test kit that will help them identify healthy fish from unhealthy ones. She pleaded with

the Minister for those kits to be made available and distributed as soon as possible to enable fish processors to support the control of sale of unapproved fish.

2.4 Oyster Production

Development Action Association under the USAID/SFMP is mobilizing and training oyster harvesters along the Densu Estuary in the Greater Accra Region. The oyster pickers have been organized into a group and have gone through training that will help them improve their oyster harvesting and production techniques along the estuary. The training includes Oyster Biology and Ecology, group dynamics and leadership skills, hygienic handling and processing. The president of the association (Beatrice Kukekpor) expressed her appreciation to the USAID/SFMP; and requested the Ministry to provide regulations and laws that will protect the resource, similar to regulations regarding fishing activities in Ghana.

The organizer of the group (Francis Agbeshie) added that the trainings have helped them to understand that oysters need clean water and appropriate salinity to survive in the river. This has motivated the group and other community members to start cleaning the beaches regularly and avoid throwing rubbish into the river. They hope for continuous support from the Ministry.

2.5 Presentation of Communique to the Minister

A communique outlining the successes and challenges of fish processors, solutions to ensure responsible fishing, and fish processing in the country was read on behalf of the group by Sister-Hope Asmah; and then presented to the Minister.

2.5 Minister's Response

The Minister, Hon. Elizabeth Aforley Quaye was very pleased to meet the fish processors and appreciated the hard work done by the three organizations to support sustainable fisheries in Ghana. She however mentioned that with regards to light fishing there has been so much success along the coast, with the exception of some few landing beaches that have resisted the change to stop light fishing. One of these communities is Ada in the Greater Accra Region.

She accepted that fish processors who are in the majority women can be the main drivers of change to unapproved fishing methods in Ghana. Some of the suggested solutions include:

- The women need to support government by rejecting to buy these products.
- She confirmed that there are test kits available but training has to be conducted for its use and soon these kits would be distributed.
- Most fishermen are being funded by women fish processors who own boats and buy fuel and other gears for them. These women have the power to stop funding these men which would prevent them from continuing such acts.
- The Ministry have plans to subsidize appropriate nets to replace the monofilaments net in the system. It is expected that this exercise will help take away unapproved nets from the system. When this is done within a certain period, no fisherman would be allowed or pardoned for using monofilament nets. She however cautioned that the women should be able to support this exercise.
- The environment need to be kept clean all the time especially the shores and more trees and mangroves should be planted along the beaches and estuaries to support growth and sustainability of the fisheries sector.

The Minister concluded that the Ministry has plans to use the media extensively for these advocacy issues and would engage fish processors to advocate against unapproved fishing and fish processing methods.

She congratulated Nana Kojo Kondua, the Chief of Elmina for his continuous support to the Ministry to end light fishing in Elmina; and asked the women from Elmina to support him in all his efforts.

She however mentioned that in order to support women fish processors along the coast, the Ministry has plans to build compliant fish processing ovens such as the FTT and Ahotor ovens. She therefore asked for the database of the fish processor groups which will form the basis for distribution of the ovens. The objective of the distribution is to support fish export to other countries.

She expressed her appreciation for the effort of the fish processors in first of all accepting that there was a problem that needed to be addressed, and also collectively making the effort to fight illegal fishing in the country. The Ministry will continue to back these efforts with enforcement of regulations and laws.



Figure 4 Madam Lydia Sasu, Executive Director of DAA giving the vote of thanks

Madam Lydia Sasu, the Executive Director of Development Action Association, thanked the Minister and the Ministry for granting them audience to share their concerns and suggestions to improve the fisheries sector. It is hoped that the collaboration will continue for sustainable fisheries management in Ghana.

2.6 Challenges

The major challenge was that the forum which was scheduled for Tuesday 22nd May 2017 was rescheduled to Wednesday 23rd May 2017 because the Minister had to attend to an emergency meeting on the scheduled date and time. The fish processors from Western region had to spend two nights in Accra which was not planned for.

On Wednesday 23rd May, the meeting which was scheduled at 1:00 pm began at about 3:00 pm because she had to attend to some visitors. The women had to leave late; with those resident outside Accra reaching their destinations as late as 3:00 am the next day.

2.7 Lessons Learnt

- Continuous collaboration with duty bearers by fish processors will provide them with first-hand information on their activities
- Effective communication is a major tool in advocacy. When issues are being presented in a structured manner, recipients of that information will appreciate and work towards them.

2.8 Conclusion

The dialogue between fish processors and the Ministry will continue to be an annual event which will form part of an advocacy strategy to present challenges and suggested solutions to support sustainable fisheries management in Ghana.

APPENDIX 1

Communiqué to Minister

Communique to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD)

Date: **24th May 2017**

Venue: **Ministry of Fisheries and Aqua Culture Development**

Organizations:

Development Action Association (DAA)

Central and Western Region Fish Mongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA)

DAASGIFT Quality Foundation (DQF)

We the fish processors from the Central, Greater Accra and Western regions of Ghana represented respectively by fish processors' associations i.e. Central and Western Region Fish Mongers Improvement Association, Development Action Association and DAASGIFT Quality foundation forward to the minister our achievements and contributions towards the sustainable fisheries management in Ghana.

We recognize that the government through the Ministry and Fisheries Commission has laws and regulations guiding the activities of fisheries in Ghana.

We also recognize the work of the Fisheries Commission in our various communities to ensure implementation of the laws which include the following:

- Regular meetings with fishers to educate them on the laws and regulations
- Embossment of canoes recognition and to curb fleet on the sea at a particular period
- Arresting culprits who use illegal means in fishing
- Licensing of canoes to monitor operation at sea
- Instituting fisheries holidays such as closed seasons

Despite these efforts by the Ministry and the government, there are still challenges which include the following:

- IUU Fishing
- Weak enforcement of the fisheries laws
- Low publicity of the fisheries laws
- Limited fisheries extension officers at various landing sites
- Sand Winning at the beaches
- Use of rubbish as sea defense
- High post-harvest loses due to unhygienic and unhealthy fish handling
- Constituting voluntary watch committees at selected landing sites

We the fish processors have implemented activities that support sustainable fisheries in Ghana which include:

- Training of fishers on Ghana's laws and regulations
- Campaign and training of fishers on improved methods of fish processing such as hygienic fish handling and processing, fish packaging and marketing, provision of

improved fish smoking stoves, fish drying racks and processing tables. Construction of Fisheries Training Center (USAID funded)

- Campaigning against child labor and trafficking
- Training and planting of wood lots and mangrove
- Oyster management to serve as alternative livelihood for fishers

We therefore wish to forward to you our concerns and suggestions to the Ministry as:

- Strict enforcement of fisheries laws in Ghana
- Campaign and training on Fisheries laws and regulations at all landing sites
- Support fish processors to build improved ovens
- Strengthen and extend voluntary committees to all landing sites
- Institute laws and regulations regarding oyster harvesting
- Strengthen and implement laws regarding illegal mining (galamsey)
- Strengthen capacity of chief fishermen and fish queens (Konkohemaa) to enforce local and government laws in their communities

We do hope that with sustainability of Ghana's fisheries at heart, these concerns will receive the needed attention.

Signed by:

Lydia Sasu
Executive Director of DAA
Representing DAA, DAASGIFT and CEWEFIA

APPENDIX 2

Daily Graphic Report, May 27, 2017

NEWS Visit www.graphic.com.gh GALAMSEY Daily Graphic, Saturday, May 27, 2017

Fishing associations call for measures to protect industry

By Theresah Esson, ACCRA

SOME fish processing associations along the coastal regions have called for the institution of measures and policies that will ensure sustainable and hygienic fishing practices in the country.

They have also urged the government to strengthen the capacity of members, particularly their leadership, to enable them to enforce by-laws that will protect the industry from unhealthy practices.

The three associations which made the call at a forum in Accra last Wednesday were DAASGIFT Quality Foundation (DQF), the Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA) and Development Action Association (DAA).

According to the Executive Director of DAA, Mrs Lydia Sosu, even though there were laws regulating activities in the fishing sector, there were still challenges in the industry that needed to be dealt with.

"Challenges such as weak enforcement of fisheries laws, low publicity of the sector, limited fisheries extension officers at the various landing sites, use of rubbish as sea defence and high post-harvest losses due to unhygienic and unhealthy fish handling still need to be addressed," she indicated.

Support

A fishmonger from the Western Region, Nana Adwoa Werum, said the region continued to make huge contributions to the fishing industry and so there was the need to support fisherfolk there with more innovative measures to help them expand their activities.

She noted that poisonous chemicals used for fishing destroyed the future of the industry but was quick to add that the immeasurable interventions by the government could help end illegal practices.

Advice

For her part, the President of a fishmongers association in the Central Region, Madam Florence Nartey, advised members to use hygienic methods in handling and preserving fish to safeguard the health of consumers.

On child labour and human trafficking activities in coastal communities in the region, she noted that the situation had now improved but insisted that more efforts were needed to eradicate the practice.

Concern

In response, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD), Mrs Elizabeth Naa Afolley Quaye, expressed worry over the practice by some fishermen in using chemicals and harmful instruments in fishing, describing it as illegal.

"Challenges such as weak enforcement of fisheries laws still need to be addressed."

She pledged her outfit's resolve to ensure that illegal fishing practices which were dangerous to human health were stopped.

"Reports from all coastal areas of the country indicate that fishermen are avoiding the use of light in their operations. However, Ada is still using illegal means to fish. More education is needed to let them understand how harmful such practices are to human health," she said.

Assurance

Mrs Quaye gave an assurance that test kits would be ready for fishmongers to test fish before purchasing it for consumption.

She further noted that mangroves that enabled fish to procreate and grow had been destroyed by illegal mining activities.

She lauded the Elmina fishing community for keeping their beaches clean and said the ministry was committed to ensuring the development of the fishing industry by building processing facilities such as the "ahoto" oven along the coast to encourage exports.



Some members of the three associations.

Figure 5 Daily Graphic Report on Meeting

APPENDIX 3

List of Participants - 2017 Annual Forum with the Fisheries Minister

Table 1 List of Participants - 2017 Annual Forum with the Fisheries Minister

NO.	First Name	Surname	Organization	Sex	
				F	M
1.	Grace	Quaye	DAA-Chorkor	x	
2.	Nancy Ayesua	Otu	DAA	x	
3.	Peter	Edzie	Apam		x
4.	Araba	Aladwewa	Moree	x	
5.	Beauty	Agbeyega	Anlo Beach	x	
6.	Ama	Kampoh	Elmina	x	
7.	Theresa	Freeman	Axim-W/R	x	
8.	Rose	Arhin	Axim	x	
9.	Esther	Mensah	Chokomey	x	
10	Florence	Nunua Nunu	Faana	x	
11.	Thomas	Suapim	Shama		x
12	Giftly	Cobbinah	Ankobrah	x	
13.	Hannah	Antwi	CEWEFIA	x	
14.	Sister-Hope	Asmah	DQF	x	
15.	Mary	Oyaade	Ahwiam Fish Processors Assoc.	x	
16.	Lydia	Sasu	DAA	X	
17	Beatrice	Kukekpor	DOPPA	X	
18	Edwin	Gakpo	DOPPA		x
19	Reynolds	Ofori Agyei	DAA		X
20	Helina	Ampia	Sekondi	x	
21	Judith	Aryeetey	Winneba	x	
22	Rebecca	Pinto	Old Ningo	x	
23	Sara	Arthur	Nyanyano	x	
24	Dora	Ansah	kokrobite	x	
25	Gladys	Abeka	Oshiyee	x	
26	Margaret	Abossey	Bortianor	x	
27	Abenaa	Akyere	Munford	x	
28	Florence	Nartey	Winneba	x	

Total participants **28**

Male: **04**

Female: **24**