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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Anti-Child Labor and Trafficking Radio
Dialogue Program
Radio Peace Report



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THE
UNIVERSITY
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Friends of the Nation

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Cover Photo: At-risk youth in fishing community. (Cover photograph – credit Kwesi Randolph Johnson, FoN)

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ACRONYMS

CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CLaT	Child Labor and Trafficking
CR	Central Region
CRC	Coastal Res. Center (of Graduate School of Oceanography); Univ. of Rhode Island
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Authorities
DAA	Development Action Association
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FiC	Fisheries Commission
FoN	Friends of the Nation
FtF	Feed the Future
GIFA	Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council
GOG	Government of Ghana
ILO	International Labor Organization
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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FORWARD

The goal of the five-year USAID-Ghana SFMP is to rebuild targeted marine fisheries stocks through the adoption of sustainable fishing practices and exploitation levels. With a focus on small pelagic fisheries management along the entire coastal stretch of Ghana, the SFMP seeks to rebuild the fishery which is near collapse. More than 100,000 metric tons of high quality low-cost animal protein that was traditionally available to poor and vulnerable coastal and inland households each year has already been lost.

Ghana's fishing industry is very important to the local economy and directly employs about 135,000 fishers in the marine capture sub-sector alone, 92% of whom are artisanal fishers. An estimated 27,000 women are involved in fish processing and marketing. Consequently, the SFMP seeks to work closely with the Government of Ghana (GOG) through the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MoFAD) under the World Bank funded fisheries project as well as with the Fisheries Commission (FC) to revamp the sector.

SFMP is also contributing to the GOG's agriculture and fisheries development goals and the USAID's Feed the Future (FtF) development objectives to reduce poverty and hunger.

SFMP is also working to reduce Child labour and Trafficking (CLaT) and focusing on promoting Behavioral Change Communications (BCC) to contribute to making CLaT practices socially unacceptable. In line with this, series of radio programmes were organized by Friends of the Nation (FoN) as part of the BCC. One of such radio programmes was organized on Wednesday 18th of May, 2016 in Winneba on Radio Peace (a local FM station).

METHODOLOGY

The radio discussion took the form of panel interview and discussions, were a presenter at the Radio station moderated the discussions. The Fante language was used during the radio discussions to enable local fisher folks to understand the content. The panelists were

- Madam Leticia Dampson (a community sustainable fisheries advocate affiliated to DAA)
- Ms. Esi Harrison (a teacher and a community anti-CLaT advocate)
- Mr. Kwesi Randolph Johnson (Project Officer, FoN)

The discussions started with the background of the fisheries sector and zoomed in on Child labor and Trafficking (CLaT). Scenarios in relation to fisheries and CLaT were cited to deepen the understanding of listeners to appreciate the issues discussed.

Highlights of Program.

- Overview of Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP)
- Background of Ghana's Fisheries
- Discussions on Child Labor and Trafficking (CLaT)
 - Definition of Child Labor and Trafficking (CLaT)
 - Causes/Drivers
 - Types of anti-CLaT interventions
 - What does the law say about CLaT?
 - Summary of FoN's anti-CLaT work

Opening Remarks

The radio programme was a live broadcast so after the ceremonial welcome and self-introduction, an overview of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) was provided by Kwesi B. Johnson, he explained that SFMP is an initiative that seeks to contribute to rebuilding targeted marine fisheries stocks and support the livelihood of about 100,000 fishers through the adoption of sustainable practices and exploitation levels. He mentioned all the implementing partners of the SFMP and their various roles.

Listeners were informed that the SFMP is a follow-up to a previous fisheries program - the Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance (ICFG) Initiative, which was implemented in the Western Region. The current SFMP by contrast is national in scope.

Kwesi Johnson provided the following background to listeners. He explained that Ghana's total annual fish requirement was about 820,000 metric tons (mt) while annual production averages 400,000 mt. He noted that the annual deficit of 420,000 mt is made up through the importation of over US\$200 million worth of fish into the country yearly. He explained that per records from the Department of Fisheries, each Ghanaian consumes about 60% of his or her animal protein needs from fish. A major and legitimate concern therefore is the decline in fish stock, resulting in high prices of fish that affect protein intake, job losses in the fisheries industry and worsening poverty, especially in fisheries communities.

He explained that the fisheries sector also provide livelihood for about 2.4 million people or 10 per cent of the population and accounted for 60 per cent of the animal protein consumed in Ghana.

He noted that scientific evidence has repeatedly pointed to the fact that Ghana's fisheries are in crisis. A declining volume of fish landed, coupled with increasing demand for fish for the increasing population growth has compelled Ghana to become a net importer of fish consumed.

Mr. Johnson stressed that flowing from the above, fish has always had far-reaching implications for food security in Ghana. Fish supplies naturally augment food availability and ensuring good nutritional outcomes particularly for the poor and rural populations. The vast number of people engaged in the fishing industry earns incomes that improve upon their access to food.

He explained that to address this challenge, the collaboration and support from the Government and people of the United States through USAID-SFMP Coastal Resources Centre, University of Rhode Island, Graduate School of Oceanography and partners has come at an opportune time towards ensuring the sustainability of our fisheries resources; particularly, so the small pelagic fisheries could recover quickly within a few years once the right management measures are put in place.

DISCUSSIONS OF CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING

The discussions on the radio programme continued with discussions on Child Labor and Trafficking. Mr. Johnson explained Child Labor and Trafficking (CLaT) to the listeners and informed them that, the history, and magnitude of CLaT in fisheries within the coastal fishing communities in the Central Region is clearly a fishing activity linked issue. Children from the coastal fishing communities are relatively better swimmers compared to children from other areas of the country. Culturally, these are communities that are already steeped deep into fishing and everything revolves around fisheries. Therefore, taking children from poor families (who hardly are able to put food on the table on daily basis) because they are good swimmers or conversant with fish processing, or both, to go do the same in other geographical areas for perceived rewards was a matter of course.

He further explained that poverty and deprivation have been identified as the main causes of CLaT practices. Declining fish harvest has seriously deepened poverty in the coastal fishing communities where there are hardly any other viable forms of livelihood activities. Many single-parent female-headed households who are among the lowest rungs of the poor send their children away to assist others for a fee, thinking they are helping both themselves and the trafficked child. Therefore, the issue of CLaT has profound gender dimensions that should be paid attention to by the appropriate authorities with adequate interventions.

Mr. Johnson recommended that the gaps in law enforcement should be plugged to contribute to reducing the expenses made in rescuing and rehabilitating victims. The fact that some police posts are just besides embarking points in communities is disturbing. This shows that either the law enforcement agencies are not conversant with that aspect of the law, or they are just playing into the hands of traffickers who may induce them to turn their attention to “more serious things”. Ignorance is however no excuse and complicity is a crime. Children’s rights are human rights and should be treated as such.

He noted that though the SFMP is about contributing to resuscitating Ghana’s fisheries, managing the fisheries is actually about managing people efforts by Friends of the Nation (FoN) and partners to bring to fore the drivers of CLaT and propose actions that will contribute to a clean, and sustainable fishery for the upcoming generations.

He concluded that the objective is to advocate for CLaT practices to be “socially unacceptable practice in the coastal-fishing source communities - to eliminate or reduce the incidences of exploitation of children by individuals therefore hindering the development of the child.

Definition of Child Labor and Trafficking

Ms. Esi Harrison (one of the panelists) explained that to ensure that Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) is understood, a working definition was developed in partnership with SFMP.

She explained the definition as indicated below:

“Any work by a person who has not attained the legal working age of 18, that is hazardous and inimical to the person’s health and or well-being and that may be to benefit of another; with the child is denied education, the right to play and the basic necessities of life. The child is not directly or may not be paid at all, or another person may take the reward for that child’s work”.

She also explained that according to the International Labor Organization (ILO),

“Child Trafficking is recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, and or receipt or both of a child for the purpose of exploitation”.

Ms. Harrison explained that Child labor and trafficking is illegal, she read sections of the Children Act (Act 1998) below;

“The Children's Act (1998), Section 1. Definition of child - For purposes of this Act, a child is a person below the age of eighteen years.

Section 2. - Welfare principle - (1): The best interest of the child shall be paramount in any matter concerning a child.

Section 5. - Right to grow up with parents. No person shall deny a child the right to live with his parents, family and grow up in a caring and peaceful environment; unless it is proved in court that living with his parents would be inimical to the child’s welfare)”.

Ms. Harrison also read and explained that *The Human Trafficking Act (694) 2005*.

She said the Act 694 says *inter alia*

“Placement for sale, bonded placement, temporary placement, placement as service where exploitation by someone else is the motivating factor shall also constitute trafficking. Where children are trafficked, the consent of the child, parents or guardian of the child cannot be used as a defense in prosecution under this Act, regardless of whether or not there is evidence of abuse of power, fraud or deception on the part of the trafficker or whether the vulnerability of the child was taken advantage of”.

She also explained that the Human Trafficking Act (694) prohibits the trafficking of Humans including Children. She said the Act prohibits also anyone who acts as intermediary for the trafficking of a person.

Madam Leticia Dampson explained that a fishing expedition is a risky venture and can lead to deformation, death as well as a hindrance to a child’s development. She noted that however, it is acceptable when the child does “child work” which includes assisting in mending of net after school hours to support the parents’ business. She explained that the difference between “child work” and child labor” is that child labor involves activities or work that is a hindrance to the child’s development and education.

She lamented that the children of fishermen are not able to get to the level of success attained by their forefathers, therefore she noted that the understanding and appreciation of effects their negative practices on the fishing industry and their own livelihood is higher with at least minimal formal learning; and even going beyond that to contribute to development of their communities.

Mr. Johnson added that in the Central Region CLaT practices were prevalent in most coastal communities which includes Moree, Ekumfi-Otuam, Gomoa Fetteh, Gomoa-Dago, Winneba, and Senya-Beraku. He explained that the children are trafficked to work in communities including Elmina, Benin, La Cote d'Ivoire, Mauritania, and Nigeria.

He also explained that other linking variables that contribute to CLaT include poor-parenting and misplaced priority on the part of adults, inadequate social support systems within communities (roles and services in the upbringing of children).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Responding to questions on recommendations;

Madam Leticia Dampson intimated that educated (literate) fishers are the ones that hold leadership positions. Therefore, it is good for fishers to educate their children, rather than involving them in hazardous fishing activities.

Mr. Johnson added that one of the critical things that can contribute to reducing CLaT is behavioral or attitudinal change. He noted that the first step was for individuals in communities to change their behavior and attitude to make CLaT practices socially unacceptable. He recommended that CLaT could be reduced through the enactment of local by-laws to and rigorous enforcement of laws by Government. He explained that communities need to encourage individual who will voluntarily help in curbing this menace by rewarding or giving them motivational packages. He added there is also the need to educate and sensitize community members to understand the issue pertaining to CLaT. Various stakeholders can be encouraged to contribute their quota to child protection and development.

He explained that the effort of the individual agencies (for example District Assemblies, Department of Social Welfare, Fisheries Commission, Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police Service) needs to be channeled into one (formation of synergies) to increase effort to CLaT socially unacceptable. Also the laws of the country need to be enforced to ensure the eradication of CLaT practices.

CONCLUSION

The program ended with the firm statement by Mr. Johnson that dwindling fish stocks induced poverty in the coastal-fishing communities in the Central Region has a direct impact on the lives of inhabitants. Access to and utilization of other social services in terms of health (reproductive health and family birth spacing) and quality education for children also play a critical role in contributing to reduce CLaT in fisheries in Ghana.

Madam Leticia Dampson also added that the quality of upbringing of children is important than the number of children that a parent bring to existence. If children are not cared for by communities and parents, development will stalled. She explained that the future of every community and nation is determined by the children of that particular community or nation.

Ms. Harrison explained that the fishing industry can only be sustained if the children attain some level of formal education and also are not trafficked to other communities or countries to be exploited. She added that CLaT practices are illegal and criminal therefore communities should stop using poverty as an excuse whilst government and its supporters should increase targeting social interventions in these poor communities.

The panelists thanked all opinion leaders in the various fishing community for supporting the SFMP activities in the communities and encouraged the leaders to work to make CLaT practices socially unacceptable.