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# SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

## FWG Regional Meetings on NFMP with GNCFC, Canoe Owners, etc



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THE  
UNIVERSITY  
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Friends of the Nation

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**Cover photo:** Cross-section of participants made of key stakeholders from the GNCFC, Fisheries Commission, Canoe Owners, etc.

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## **ACRONYMS**

CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FiC	Fisheries Commission
FEU	Fisheries Enforcement Unit
FoN	Friends of the Nation
FWGs	Fisheries Working Groups
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council
IUU	Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NAFPTA	National Fish Processors and Trader Association
NFMP	National Marine Fisheries Management Plan
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
STWG	Scientific and Technical Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) committed approximately \$24 million US Dollars for the implementation of the USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP). The objective of this five-year project (October 2014-October 2019) is to rebuild targeted marine fisheries stocks and catches through adoption of responsible fishing practices. The project contributes to the Government of Ghana's fisheries development objectives and USAID's Feed the Future Initiative. More than 100,000 men and women involved in the local fishing industry will benefit from this project. Working closely with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and the Ghana Fisheries Commission, SFMP aims to end overfishing of key stocks important to local food security through:

- Improved legal enabling conditions for co-management, use rights and effort-reduction strategies.
- Strengthened information systems and science-informed decision-making.
- Increased constituencies that provide the political and public support needed to rebuild fish stocks.
- Implementation of applied management initiatives for several targeted fisheries ecosystems.

The project is also promoting ecosystem-based and adaptive management approaches, improved law enforcement and co-management of local fish stocks in lagoons and estuaries. Additionally, improvements in the value chain of smoked fish, important to tens of thousands of women fish processors and marketers, are supported by the project.

The USAID/Ghana SFMP focuses efforts on implementing Ghana's National Marine Fisheries Management Plan, gazetted in 2015, with an emphasis on small pelagics fisheries along the entire coastline as these stocks are the leading source of animal protein supply in the Ghanaian diet. Highlights of key Life-of-Project Results in the current M&E Plan include:

- Implementation of National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP 2015-2019) and measures that reduce fishing effort, to allow for the recuperation of tens of depleted fish stocks to recover.

In order to achieve above results SFMP is working at multiple levels and closely collaborating with key stakeholders especially Government agencies and fishers with the aim to achieve successful implementation of the for the NFMP.

In line with this approach, SFMP worked through Friends of the Nation (FoN) to catalyze and strengthen regional multi-stakeholder fisheries stakeholder platform called the Fisheries Working Groups (FWGs).

The FWGs formed in Greater Accra, Volta, Central and Western Regions of Ghana are Regional level advisory groups with a mission to provide support and advisory services to the Fisheries Commission with the aim to improve fisheries governance at the regional and local scale. The membership of FWG include representatives of the fishers (semi-industrial, canoe fishermen, and women processors), Regional level regulatory Agencies (EPA, Marine Police, Ghana Navy, Ghana Air force and Attorney Generals Dept.) and representative of Regional House of chiefs and the Department of Social welfare especially in the case of the Central Region.

The FWGs is part of the SFMP nested governance arrangements for improved fishery management units at the regional level. The Fisheries Working Groups provide the most

strategic platform for sustaining the interest of stakeholders in fisheries governance and equipping Regional Fisheries Commission with the commensurate stakeholder collaboration and support for the implementation of key fisheries management actions at the regional scale.

For year 4 of the SFMP project (Oct 2017 to September 2018), the focus of the FWG was on the implementation of the National Marine Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP 2015-2019).

In year 4 the FWGs with support from SFMP conveyed periodic meetings with stakeholder to discuss the content of the NFMP and made recommendations for the successful implementation of the NFMP 2015- 2019.

## **SECTION 2: BACKGROUND**

Ghana's marine Fish stock, especially the Small Pelagics stock have declined to the extent that fish landing is all time lowest. The importance of the fisheries is being lost and this has become a major worry to stakeholders as Ghana's fisheries have far reaching implications for food security. Fish supplies naturally augment food availability and ensuring good nutritional outcomes particularly for the poor and rural populations in Ghana. The vast number of people engaged in the fishing industry also earns incomes that improve upon their access to food. The Fisheries Sector support the livelihood of about 10% of the Ghanaian population along the value chain.

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

To improve fisheries governance and address the challenges of the fisheries sector the Government of Ghana developed the National Marine Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP 2015-2019) in consultation with stakeholders.

The NFMP was prepared in line with the provisions of section 42 (1) of the Fisheries Act of 2002 (Act 625) which mandates the Fisheries Commission to prepare Fisheries Management Plans for the Fisheries Sector.

The Goal of the NFMP is to rebuild fish stock to enhance the socio-economic conditions of fishing communities, create employment within National and International Framework and standards and improve food security as well as contribute to GDP and foreign exchange earnings.

The Purpose of the NFMP is to provide a strategic framework for reversing the declining trend of fish resources and establish a sound management regime to ensure that fish stocks are exploited sustainably in an enhanced environment.

The NFMP was approved by the Parliament of Ghana in the year 2015 and the plan is being implemented from 2015 to 2019. It is expected that when the NFMP is fully implemented will contribute significantly to rebuilding the Marine fish stock, promote conservation while also increase profitability with reduction of post-harvest losses and increased value addition.

In view of this, the FWG Regional meetings were organized to engage fisher folks on the NFMP implementation.

### **2.1 Objective of the Meetings**

The Canoe/Gear Owners, Boat/Canoe Captains, Service Boys and crew members etc. are the key fishers who influences the day-to-day fishing practices, they determine and regulate the fishing practices whether use of legal or illegal methods. These very important group of fishers can actively contribute to the adoption of responsible fishing and contribute



immensely to rebuild the Small Pelagics fish stocks. However, though they are very important group; they had not been engaged adequately on the NFMP.

In view of this, Regional meetings were organized under the FWG platforms to engage with these key fisher folks.

The objective of the meetings was to provide a platform to engage canoe/gear owners, boat/canoe captains, service boys, crew members and fishmongers on the National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP). With the view to communicate the content of the NFMP to the fisher folks' leaders to garner their support and active participation for the implementation of the Plan.

These meetings were also aimed at providing additional platforms for the fisher folks leaders to share the outputs from the F2F meetings with broader stakeholders.

The meetings therefore were used to create the opportunity for new ground coverage for the USAID/SFMP project for year 4 as the project skew more on performance and new approaches to achieve responsible fishing to contribute to rebuilding of the Small pelagics fish stock.

## **2.2 Participation**

In all a total of 211 key fisher folks' leaders made up of 163 males and 48 females were engaged. Participants included regional executives of GNCFC, Executives of NAFPTA and women groups, Canoe/Gear Owners leaders, Boat/Canoe Captains, Service Boys leaders and crew leaders.

Table 1 below gives the details of the participants for each of the meetings held.

**Table 1. A table showing of the meetings details**

Meetings	Date of Meeting	Region and Venue of meeting	Number of Participants		
			Male	Female	Total
Central Region FWG meeting with GNCFC and Fisher folks Leaders engagement meeting	8 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2017	Central Region, Cape-Coast	19	10	29
Greater Accra FWG meeting with Fisher Leaders engagement meeting.	12 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2017	Greater Accra	11	3	14
Western Region FWG Meeting on NFMP with Fisher folks in Western Region (GNCFC, NAFPTA Canoe/ Gear owners ,etc)	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2018	Western Region, FoN Office	63	3	66
Volta Region FWG Meeting on NFMP with fisher folks in Volta Region (GNCFC, NAFPTA Canoe/ Gear owners, etc)	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2018	Volta Region, Keta	70	32	102
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>163</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>211</b>

### 2.3 Key Output of Meetings

The meetings were used to sensitize participants to support the implementation of the National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP). The meetings were also used to deepen fisher folk's engagements for compliance and support to the Implementation of the NFMP.

The meetings emphasize the importance of the NFMP to contribute to rebuild the small pelagic fish stock. The meeting stressed on the implementation of key actions such as a second fishing holiday in all coastal regions, canoe registration and capping for new entrants. At the meetings the content of the NFMP was communicated to the participants including GNCFC, women fishers, Canoe/Gear Owners, Boat/Canoe Captains, Service Boys and crew members

The meetings created the platform for the officials of Fisheries Commission and the Fisheries Enforcement Unit (FEU) to inform participants on the status of the implementation of the NFMP including the closed season for trawlers, canoe registration and embossment, etc. The meetings also discussed the progress and challenges of NFMP implementation. The meetings discussed practical means of addressing the challenge with the implementation of the NFMP.

The FWG meetings built on the F2F engagements by providing platforms for sharing among the various associations the consensus of the F2F to promote joint effort for compliance of the and implementation of the NFMP. The meetings also providing platforms to collate ideas and strategies for the implementation of the capacity reduction strategies proposed in the NFMP.

## SECTION 3: DETAILED SESSION

Participatory and interactive sessions were used to ensure that the objective of the meetings were achieved. Discussions were held in the local languages. Simple chart, pictures and other audio visuals were used to explain the content of the NFMP to participants.

Also interaction sessions were used to facilitate discussions to ensure that the participants felt free to ask questions and seek clarifications about the content of the NFMP.

The sessions of the meetings included the following:

- **Information Session:** This session involved the use of interactive presentations to share information with participants. Key presentations made included the following;
  1. Overview of the SFMP
  2. Content of the NFMP (2015 to 2019)
  3. Status of the implementation of the NFMP (2015 to 2019)
  4. Challenges and lessons learned from the Implementation of the NFMP (2015 to 2019)
- **Open Forum:** This session was used to create interactive platforms for participants to discuss the presentations made, seek clarification and made recommendations.

At open forum session the representative of the GNCFC were given the platform to present the update of the F2F fisher folks' consultations.

### 3.1 Overview of the SFMP

At all the meetings Mr. Donkris Mevuta made a presentation on the overview of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP). In his presentation, he informed participants that the five-year SFMP project was being supported by the USAID and implemented from 2014 to 2019. He explained that the objective of the SFMP is to rebuild marine fisheries stock especially small pelagics. He explained that, years of open access, increased fishing effort, illegal fishing practices, etc were responsible for the near-collapse of Ghana's marine fisheries. He said the SFMP project was poised to reverse this trend by supporting the rebuilding of marine fisheries stocks especially the small pelagics.

Mr. Mevuta explained that the SFMP was therefore, working with fisher folks and stakeholders to a) contribute to the adoption of responsible fishing practices and b) bring profitability to the fishery:

- On adopting responsible fishing practices; Mr. Mevuta recounted that many fisher folks continue to use unsustainable and illegal fishing methods contrary to the provisions of the fisheries laws and regulations. Mr. Mevuta emphasized the need for fishermen to adopt sustainable and responsible fishing methods which was doable and would contribute to rebuild the marine fish stocks. He explained that fishers in countries like Ivory Coast, Senegal, Gambia, Philippines, etc. had adopted responsible fishing and have seen massive improvement in their fish stocks. He said SFMP will continue to work with fisher folks Association and Government to contribute to reduce illegal fishing while supporting with the implementation of the fisheries management actions informed by science.
- To bring profitability to the fishery Mr. Mevuta explained that profitability was not about the volumes or tons of fish harvested per each fisherman but rather, profitability depended on good value addition to the fish catch. He cited a situation where both Ghana and Iceland catch the same tons of fish annually but Iceland adds-value to the

fish and realizes about \$17 million dollars whereas Ghana makes only \$1 million dollars. He therefore, impressed upon the women fish processors to use the Ahotor smoking stoves and other value addition methods to improve their profitability.

### **3.2 Presentation of the Content of the NFMP**

Mr. Kyei Yamoah of FoN made a presentation on the National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP 2015- 2019) and the expected role of stakeholders at each of the meetings. This presentation was made to inform participants about the content of the NFMP.

In his presentation, he said the NFMP is a national policy for the sustainable management of Ghana's fisheries resources and covers the marine sector for the period 2015-2019.

Mr. Yamoah recounted that the NFMP identified the following key fisheries management challenges.

- Inadequate information on fisheries Biology and Stocks: He explained that the NFMP identifies that there is very little scientific information known about the biology and current biomass levels of the main commercial species. And available information suggests that demersal fish stocks are overexploited and require rebuilding strategies.
- Excessive fishing effort exerted in all fisheries: He explained that the NFMP recognizes that excessive fishing capacity requires effort reduction to more sustainable levels. The overcapacity translates into levels of fishing effort above the MSY level of effort representing both economic and biological overfishing. The NFMP prescribed that urgent reduction of fishing effort by management action is required.
- Weak enforcement of fisheries regulations; He explained that the NFMP indicates that there is weak enforcement of the fisheries laws and regulations due to inadequate resources (both human and financial) and adequate conflict resolution mechanisms. More strategic use of existing resources to support new conservation actions should be applied.
- Low levels of protection of marine biodiversity: He said that there were inadequate protection of specific marine ecosystems. Better protection of sensitive ecosystems is required to ensure replenishment of biomass, particularly of coastal areas which are known nursery areas of various commercial species. The NFMP prescribe that the closure of known spawning and nursery areas is required.
- Inappropriate procedures in certifying fish for export: Catch monitoring and catch certification are key processes to ensure informed management decisions. There are no clear cut guidelines on verification of fish and fishery product for export often leading to rejects.

Mr. Yamoah explained that section 42 (1) of Act 625 mandates the Fisheries Commission to prepare a management plan and the NFMP 2015 to 2019 was developed with the objectives of:

- Reducing the excessive pressure on the fish stocks
- Ensuring that fish stocks within the marine waters of Ghana are exploited within biologically acceptable levels
- Ensuring effective fisheries legislation is implemented to protect the nation's fish resources.

He said it has become evident that Ghana's fisheries were collapsing and hence the development of the National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP) to help reverse the trend. He spoke about specific measures for artisanal fisheries (Canoe) to contribute to reducing excessive pressure on fish stock. These he said included;

- Control new entrants of canoes to the fisheries (by registration of all existing canoe and capping / moratorium for new entrants)
- Introduction of Additional Fishing Holiday to the already existing One day to achieve two fishing holidays in a week.
- Implementing of co-management for the artisanal sector to promote collaborative and participatory fisheries management at the local levels.
- Modernization of the Fleets by Introduction for fiberglass and steel boats, etc to replace old canoes.
- Promoting community group involvement in post-harvest and facilitating business opportunities to reduce post-harvest losses and increase profitability to the fishery.
- Implementation of Insurance and Pension Scheme as support schemes to fisher folks.

Mr. Yamoah explained that specifically, the NFMP prescribes the following measures for the industrial and artisanal fleets:

- Reduction in fishing days for trawlers and Inshore fleets (scaled annually to achieve 50% reduction in fishing days over the 3 years by introducing Close Seasons)
- Deletion of inactive boats that have been inactive for 1 year
- Reduce Fleet size, impose licence conditions to reduce N<sub>Q</sub> of fishing days.
- Cancellation of licenses for repeated IUU offenders and violators of fisheries laws and regulations without an option to replace that vessel.
- Replacement scheme for registered vessels (one new one to replace two old ones.) to gradually contribute to the reduction of the number of industrial fleets
- Control the number and capacity of vessels through implementation of replacement scheme for registered vessels allowing the replacement of old vessels with new vessel not exceeding 300 GRT.
- Impose licence conditions to reduce the number of days per vessel available.

Mr. Yamoah explained that some of the measures proposed in the NFMP to address weak enforcement of fisheries regulations included the following;

- Increase effectiveness of fisheries enforcement
- Maintain and upgrade vessel monitoring system (VMS),
- Enforce strictly provisions in Act to eliminate IUU fishing.
- Collaborate effectively with regional bodies on MCS strategies to combat IUU fishing;



**Figure 1. A picture with Mr. Kyei Yamoah of FoN presenting the content of the NFMP to participants at the W/R meeting.**

### **3.3 Implementation Status of the NFMP**

Official of Fisheries Commission (FiC) at each of the meetings shared the implementation status of the NFMP. They explained that the NFMP was approved by the Parliament of Ghana in the year 2015 and the plan is being implemented from 2015 to 2019. They recounted that the following measures in the NFMP were been implemented:

- Closed season for Trawlers.
- Canoe Registration and Embossment
- Discussions on the Additional fishing holiday for canoes
- Discussions of Co-management schemes

#### **3.3.1 Closed Season for Trawlers.**

They explained that the implementation of the closed season was part of the measures to reduce fishing effort and capacity. The FiC officials recounted that the trawlers started their closed season in the year 2016 with one full month of closure in November 2016. In 2017 the season was closed for the trawlers for 2 months in the months of February and March 2017. And in 2018, the Trawlers went on another 2 months closed season for the months of January and February. They explained that the implementation of the closed season would continue as proposed in the NFMP.

#### **3.3.2 Canoe Registration and Embossment**

The FiC officials shared that canoe registration and embossment exercise were underway with about 90% of existing canoes already registered. They recounted that major challenge was with the embossment of the numbers on canoes which some of the canoe owners were yet to do. They urged chief fishermen to encourage their fishermen to emboss the numbers on their canoes to avoid being confronted by the Fisheries Enforcement Unit offshore.

The FiC officials also shared that:

- The registration number on vessels would give easy identification of the owners as prescribed by the fisheries regulation.
- It is illegal for canoes not to have registration numbers.
- The registration numbers would be used for distribution and access to the premix fuel.
- After the registration of canoes and the capping of new entrants will be introduced, therefore, canoes that were not registered would not be allowed to fish.
- No registration number were given to canoe involved in illegal fishing e.g. illegal Transshipment “saiko”.

The FiC officials directed that:

- Every canoe owner should emboss the registration numbers on their canoes.
- The registration numbers should be written in white and underlined with black or vice versa and it should be placed at a point where it can be easily detected.
- The registration numbers should be written bold enough for easy visibility.

### **3.3.3 Additional Fishing Holiday**

The FiC officials explained that the NFMP proposed the institutionalization of one additional holiday for artisanal canoes to the add to the existing holiday. They shared that SFMP provided platforms with the F2F engagements for fisher folks to build consensus from region to region on the additional holiday. They explained that fisher folks have generally, agreed on Sunday as the day for the additional holiday. The Officials from the FiC explained that some stakeholders however, have complained about the non-compliance of the already existing fishing holidays which is Tuesdays in most areas. They explained that the existing holidays were not captured in law and therefore violators could not be prosecuted. They recounted that when the additional holiday and the existing holidays are accepted and endorsed then MOFAD will issue an administrative order that can now make the violation on the fishing holidays be prosecutable.

### **3.3.4 Co-management schemes**

The FiC officials shared that a National Fisheries Co-Management Policy was been finalized for the canoe fisheries as part of the NFMP. They explained that the co-management policy was been developed with closed collaboration with SFMP. They recounted that the policy was expected to be finalized and adopted by MOFAD to provide the strategic framework for fisheries co-management in Ghana.

## **3.4 Challenges of the Implementation of the NFMP**

The officials of Fisheries Commission (FiC) explained that the following were key challenges identified after 3 year of the implementation of the NFMP.

- Low understanding and appreciation of the content and ecological justification of the provisions in the NFMP (2015-2019). They explained that many stakeholders did not understand the content of the NFMP especially, most of the local fishers, traditional leaders, Media persons, district Assembly staff and even some of the local zonal fisheries commission staff. They admitted that there has not been adequate sensitization on the NFMP by the commission especially at all the over 300 landing sites. They however, acknowledged and praised SFMP project for organizing more sensitization events on the NFMP.
- Lack of resources for the implementation of the NFMP. They explained that the required resources including financial, human and logistics were not available for the

successful implementation of the NFMP. They recounted that there was need for adequate budget allocation to support the implementation of the NFMP.

- Low communication, sensitization and publicity of the NFMP. They expressed that this was due to limited resources coupled with lack of media interest of fisheries issues. They recounted that the general public were not aware of the NFMP due to the low publicity by MOFAD and FiC.
- Inadequate consultation by MOFAD/ FiC with the fisher folks' leaders and association executives on their role for the implementation of the NFMP. They said the FiC had not done adequate consultation with the fisher folks leaders for them to appreciate their role for the implementation of the NFMP.
- No operational committee formed. They explained that the plan prescribed that an operational committee should be formed to facilitate the implementation of the NFMP. They recounted that absence of the operational committee has contributed to the slow pace of the implementation.
- No Annual implementation plans and review for the implemented actions. They recounted that due the absence of the operation committee implementation review has not been done and annual implementation plans are also not made to guide the implementation. So the performance and impact of the implementation of the NFMP are not tracked to guide and provide useful feedback.

### **3.5 Lessons learned from the Implementation of the NFMP**

The fisheries commission officials share the following lessons from the 3 years of implementation of the NFMP;

- Working closely with the media, CSOs and other partners could generate additional resources for communications and outreach on the NFMP.
- More sensitization and awareness creation on the NFMP will enhance stakeholder acceptance and support for the implementation.
- Adequate budgeting by MOFAD/FiC will provide the financial resources and logistics to support the implementation.





**Figure 2. A picture of Mr. Alex Sabah, FiC Official (Regional Director W/R) explaining the status on the NFMP implementation at the W/R meeting.**

The Fisheries Enforcement Unit (FEU) also shared lessons learned from the implementation of the NFMP. They explained that the role of the FUE is to ensure compliance and deterrence for the implementation of the provisions in the NFMP. They recounted that the fisher folks were not collaborating with the FEU, especially during enforcement exercises some fisher folks restrain the FEU from performing their duties. They advised the fisher folks to desist from such actions and support the FEU to protect the fishing livelihood for them. They recounted that the other challenges of the FEU were low resources and personnel to cover the entire coastline. They also explained that political and other interferences was also a major challenge to their work.

The FUE also said the fish stock could be rebuilt if illegal fishing is halted and the NFMP is fully implemented. They added that fisher folks should support the monitoring of fishing trawlers that engage in destructive and illegal fishing and report other local fishermen who use illegal fishing gears.

They recommended that chief fishermen could be empowered to promote the implementation of the NFMP as well as assist in reporting illegal fishing to support fisheries enforcement.

They requested that copies of the canoe register be made available to the FEU to enable them to detect canoes who may use false registration numbers.



**Figure 3. A picture with FEU officer, Agyemang Opambour, making his submission at one of the meetings.**

### **3.6 Open Forum**

At each of the meetings the open forum session was used to create platforms for participants to discuss the presentations made, seek clarification and submit recommendations.

During the open forum participants explained that, after three (3) years of the passage of the NFMP, the implementation had been too slow. They explained that there was selective implementation of the provisions in the NFMP, as Closed season for Trawlers and canoe registration were the key actions been implemented. They recounted that processes for some of the action such as co-management, moratorium for canoe, insurance schemes, etc had begun but the tangible actions had not yet been seen.

Participants also recounted that there has been low participation of stakeholders and low commitment of resources from government for the implementation of the NFMP.

Participants explained that the capacity reduction and conservation strategies in the NFMP including moratoriums for canoes, additional fishing holidays for canoes, establishment of marine protected areas, etc. were laudable measures to contribute to medium to long term rebuilding of the marine fish stocks. Participants however, expressed that those measures are expected to have adverse effects on the fishing communities in the short term. Therefore, the likely effect of these measures should be assessed to provide mitigation measures for fisher folks.

Participants recounted that another challenge for the implementation of the additional holiday was inadequate documentation of the nature and form of the existing traditional fishing holidays. They explained that the duration of the fishing holiday defers by traditional area. For Western region the Tuesday fishing holiday starts from Monday evening from 5pm to Tuesday evening by 5pm. During this period no one is allowed to land and sell fresh fish from a canoe, and in some areas no one is expected to go for fishing within that 24hours

period. They explained that in most areas from 6pm on Tuesday, anyone can go fishing. However, in some traditional areas in the Central region fishermen are allowed to go fishing on Tuesday or allowed stay at sea on Tuesday and could land their fish on the Tuesday but are not allowed to sell the fresh fish that Tuesday but could sell the fish the next day.

Participants recommended that the GNCFC should document the nature and form of all existing fishing holidays along the coastal belt including the time the fishing holiday starts and ends and the traditional conditions allowed. This would inform the implementation of the additional holiday. They also suggest that the additional fishing holiday when endorsed together with the existing holidays could be sent to parliament to be passed as law.

Participants explained that fishermen were not getting the required wood for the manufacturing of the canoes because such huge trees were almost extinct and therefore there has been the need to support the modernization of the fishing fleet in Ghana. But participants indicated that they were not convinced that the fiberglass boats would be suitable for all the types of fishing (e.g. beach seine), they therefore recommended that the fiberglass should be piloted by the government in collaboration with the GNCFC members. They explained that fishermen would endorse and accept the fiberglass boats if the piloting of the fiberglass boats are successful.

Participants expressed that they were worried about the weak enforcement of the fisheries laws. They recounted that they had made several appeal to the FEU and Government for strict enforcement of the fisheries laws. Participants strongly advise government to provide resources for the FEU and task them to enforce the fisheries laws. They also suggested that chief fishermen could be given the mandate to enforce the fisheries laws at local level.





**Figure 4. A picture of a female representative of NAFPTA making her comment at the Volta Region Meeting.**



**Figure 5. A picture of cross-section of participants at the Volta region meeting**

### **3.7 Update of the F2F fisher folks' consultations**

At each of the regional meetings the executives of the GNCFC were given the platform to share the output of the F2F engagement.

They explained that the F2F engagements were used to discuss and built consensus on the additional fishing holidays. They shared that the GNCFC had been engaging with their

members under the F2F platform and had agreed on Sunday as the additional holiday that will be consistent at all the Regions. They explained that the main challenge had been the existing fishing holiday which is mostly Tuesday for Central, Greater Accra Regions and most part of Western region. They recounted that the Jomoro district of the Western region have Thursdays as the holiday and for Volta region Saturday and Wednesday were the main existing fishing holiday days for the communities. The executives of the GNCFC explained they agreed to build consensus to explore the selection of two days that could be uniform across the entire regions.

They said Tuesdays and Sundays were largely agreed on from western, central and Greater Accra region however the fisher folks in Volta Region preferred Saturday and Sunday. They explained that the consultations were ongoing to attempt to arrive at 2 uniform holidays.



**Figure 6, Togbi Seth Abotsi, chairman of the Volta Regional GNCFC sharing the update of F2F Consultation at the Volta Region Meeting.**





**Figure 7. Nana Kojo Konduah, chairman of W/R GNCFC sharing the update of F2F Consultation at the Western Region Meeting**

## **SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS**

Participants discussed and agreed that the content of the National Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP) are very good and would contribute to improve the livelihood of the fishes, they however recounted that the content of the NFMP was not known by many key stakeholders because of the low sensitization. They recommended that there was the need for MOFAD and FiC to improve communication of the NFMP and engage other key stakeholders for the successful implementation. They advised MOFAD/FiC to develop jingles, videos, announcements and other IE &C materials and use their mobile vans to support communication of the content of the NFMP in the various coast districts.

Some of the key recommendations made by participants included the following:

- MOFAD/ FiC could train fisher folks in data collection so that the local fisher could assist in collecting simple fish stock data to support fisheries research. They also explained that fisher folks could also held identify areas rich in fisheries resources to inform possible closed areas.
- More media personnel should be groomed and trained on fisheries management, fisheries laws and about the fisheries sector to enable the media to promote and highlight key the fisheries issues on their various networks. They explained that a lot of media houses were not interested in fisheries issues because they do not understand fisheries, however, training them could improve reporting on fisheries especially the content of the NFMP.
- Members of Parliament especially those from coastal constituencies should be engaged on the content of the NFMP to inform them and garner their support for the implementation of the plan.
- MOFAD should roll out sensitization programme on the NFMP for Coastal District Assemblies and traditional leaders along the coast for their appreciation and support.

- FiC should adopt the FWG concept and expand the membership to include, coastal Districts, traditional leader, media organization and other key stakeholders. They argued that the FWG platform had promoted active dialogue of fisheries issues at the regional scale and was contributing to enhance fisheries governance so there was the need to formalise the FWG.

## **SECTION 5: CONCLUSION**

The meetings were successful as participants contributed to the discussions and made recommendations. The meetings created the platform for the officials of Fisheries Commission to inform participants on the current status for the implementation of the NFMP including the closed season, canoe registration and embossment. Facilitation at the meetings enhanced rich exchange of information and consensus building among the fishers. Participants at the meetings concluded that the NFMP 2015 -2019 had very laudable provisions that would contribute to rebuild the marine fish stock however they advised stakeholders to support the socialization of the content of the NFMP so that many fisher folks and stakeholder would appreciate the content and support the implementation. Participants also emphasized the urgent need for fisher folks' associations to support the successful implementation of the NFMPs.