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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Fisheries Working Group Meeting in Central Region



Hɛn Mpoano



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ACRONYMS

C/R	Central Region
CEDECOM	Central Region Development Commission
CLaT	Child Labour and Trafficking
CRC-URI	Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island
FC	Fisheries Commission
FoN	Friends of the Nation
FtF	Feed the Future
FWG	Fisheries Working Group
GoG	Government of Ghana
ICFG	Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
W/R	Western Region

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INTRODUCTION

FoN facilitated the formation of a new Fisheries Working Group (FWG) in the Central Region (C/R) to promote stakeholder collaboration in the Region and enhance fisheries governance. The process began with identification of key stakeholder institutions for the C/R FWG. Letters were then submitted to the identified institutions for nominees for the C/R FWG the letters explained the purpose of the group and the relevance of the nominees for the identified institutions. On May 13 2014 a meeting was organized for the FWG-C/R. The meeting discussed the purpose for the formation of the FWG, the experience in the Western Region (W/R), the challenges and successes. The proposed membership and the expected role of the FWG under the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) were discussed. The meeting agreed on their roles and made proposals for the expansion of the membership for effective delivery. The Central Regional Director of Fisheries applauded the process and noted the formation of the FWG will enhance fisheries governance in the Region.

The proceedings of the meeting is as follows

On Wednesday May 13, 2015, FoN organized the maiden meeting for the FWG C/R.

METHODOLOGY

The meeting used a mixture of methods including power-point presentations, experience sharing, interactive discussions, as well as question and answer segments. Both English and the local dialect (Fante) were used throughout the meeting to ensure active participation of all participants.

DETAILED SESSION

The three-hour meeting started at 10:20 am and ended at 1:20 pm. The meeting started with an opening prayer by a participant. A round of self-introduction followed, for participants to familiarize with each other. Afterwards, participants were informed of purpose for the meeting.

Purpose of meeting by Donkris Mevuta

Mr. Mevuta thanked all participants for making time to attend the meeting. He gave a brief overview to the formation of the FWG -W/R. He informed that the group was inaugurated in January 2011 by Hon. Mike Acheampong, then Chairman of the Fisheries Commission (FC). The FWG was mandated to provide an advisory role to the regional fisheries commission by advising the director of fisheries on pertinent issues. Mr. Mevuta informed that the W/R FWG has had a lot of capacity enhancement. He indicated that lessons learned in the former Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance (ICFG) Initiative, during which the W/R FWG was formed, will be replicated in the C/R by the new SFMP; hence the quest to pilot the FWG concept in the C/R.



Figure 1 Donkris Mevuta explaining purpose of the meeting to participants

Introduction to SFMP by Mr. Kofi Agbogah

Mr. Abgogah, informed participants that there are nine implementing partners on the SFMP with the Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island (CRC-URI) being the key implementing partner. He noted that the project is being funded by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). He explained the main objective of the SFMP as 'to rebuild Ghana's marine fisheries stocks and catches through the adoption of responsible fishing practices, and also to contribute to Government of Ghana's (GoG) fisheries development objectives and USAID Feed the Future (FtF) Initiative. He hinted that the past ICFG initiative was a learning process which success led to the inception of the SFMP. The main purpose of Rebuild marine fisheries stocks and catches through adoption of responsible fishing practices

Mr. Agbogah further described the geographic focus of the project and explained that some interventions will be at the National level, while others will be at the regional and community levels. He elaborated that for the management of small pelagic stocks, the focus will be a national scale. For demersals, the focus will be on W/R, while community based plans will then be on the Pra and Ankobra estuaries. He added the formation of the FWG in W/R was a very successful course of action, and noted that there are some representatives at the meeting to share their experiences.

In his presentation, he showed a graphical representation of the state of fisheries in Ghana, which alarmed some of the participants who saw it for the first time. He indicated then that we need a comprehensive planning process to have increased food supply and increased profitability.

Comments and Questions from participants

Nana Adam Eduafo (W/R FWG)

In Senegal, they have quota systems, and should one land more than the quoted quantity, it will be measured at the landing beach and arrest warranted because the laws are very operational. This can and should be replicated in Ghana because Ghanaians in Senegal and other countries comply to the laws in the country.

Osei Karikari (CEDECOM)

Is it possible to promote alternate livelihood sources like Aquaculture with the project, as part of empowering the fishermen?

Response: Fishermen are more of hunters than farmers who do not prefer aquaculture.

Sotor Mensah (Inshore)

If politicians will not be involved in the fisheries sector, we will be able to manage the sector very well. Again, there are some artisanal canoes which are bigger than the semi-industrial ones. Hence I suggest that the inshore should be considered artisanal fisheries. It will also be very good if Industrial vessel operators are invited to such meetings.

Konadu(CEDECOM):

I think it wouldn't be bad to consider specifically shrimp/lobster fishing as an alternative

Adofo (CEDECOM)

The cultural mindset and behavior of fishermen must be taken into consideration to help ensure sustainability of such projects. Their inclusion in the process should be paramount.

Chief Fisherman of Gomoa Fete

Fishermen using small-sized mesh nets must be targeted

Response: Mr. Agbogah advised that blame games must be avoided and the concentration should be on the best means of solving the problems.

Strengthening enabling conditions for marine governance by Kwadwo Kyei Yamoah

Mr. Yamoah informed that as part of the SFMP activities, FoN will be engaging a lot of grassroots stakeholders to ensure they are part of every process relevant to the project. He specified some activities to include, but not limited to:

- Legislative reforms for co-management
- Stakeholder caucuses and hearings at some selected major landing sites (Tema, Elmina, Axim and Sekondi)
- Strengthening law enforcement

He talked briefly about the milestones and expected output of all the activities; and then informed participants that in the first year there will be a lot of concentration in the C/R regarding Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) in fisheries. He indicated that a study has already begun to understand the reality of CLaT. Some participants wanted to know what age limit will be referred to as child labour when used to support fishing activities. To this, Mr. Yamoah indicated that the study will bring out more details for discussion later on in the project life cycle. Some participants also shared some experiences regarding CLaT and pleaded that when the C/R FWG is finally formed, members need to consider inputs that could be made on CLaT.

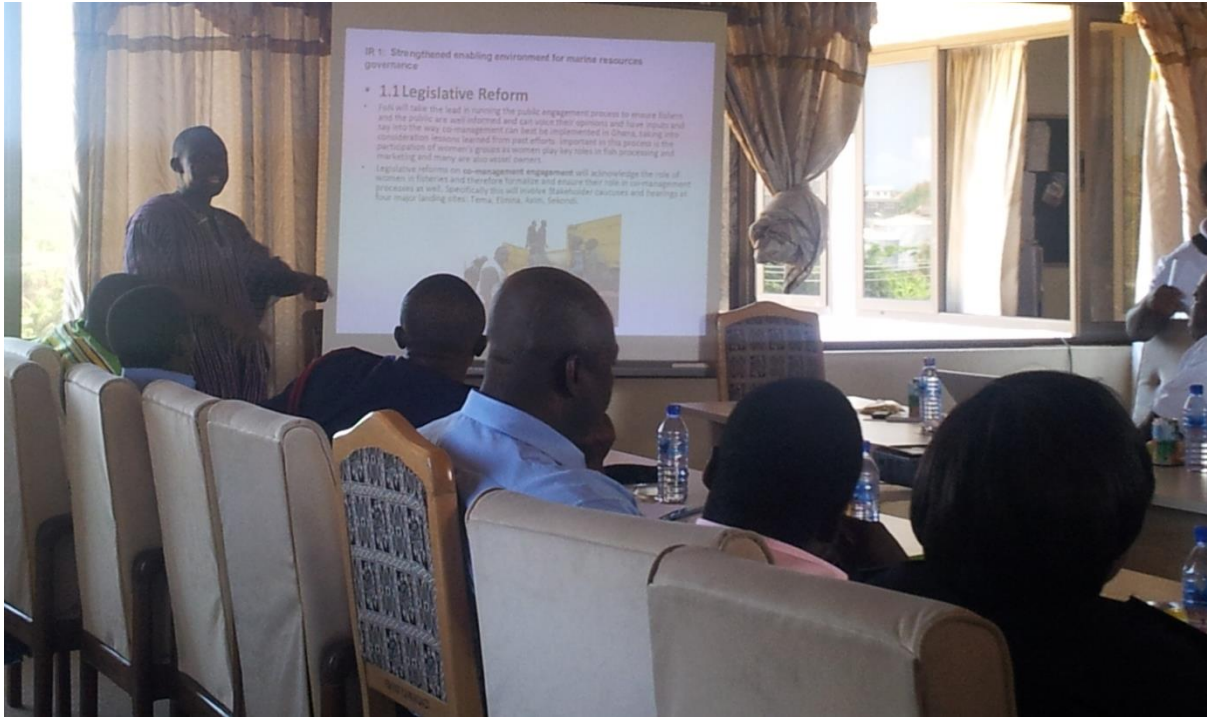


Figure 4 Mr. Yamoah presenting on enabling conditions for marine governance

Mr. Yamoah also discussed with participants a proposed membership of the C/R FWG, which the participants did a lot of deliberations and made necessary inputs. Mr. Sotor advised for the inclusion of the Forestry Commission since according to him they play important role in fish breeding.

Experience sharing by the W/R FWG members

The Chairman of the W/R FWG, Danny Kirk-Mensah shared some experience of starting a group formation as far back as 33 years ago in Sekondi. He indicated how delighted he was to be part of the formation of the C/R FWG, due to the enormous benefits he observed since the formation of the W/R FWG. He added that prior to the formation of the W/R FWG, he (representing the Trawlers) and Nana Adam Eduafo (representing the canoe fishers) had a huge grudge concerning fishing activities. He said FoN came in to convince them to avoid all manner of blame games and look at how best they could collaborate. Then came in the ICFG initiative about 5 years ago to bring on board a lot of stakeholders, who met often and thought through issues of fisheries and how best to collaboratively manage the resource. Since then, he added, the group has worked on promoting self-compliance. He concluded his speech by stating 'although we have not been able to totally eradicate the situation we have really seen improvement.

Nana Adam Eduafo, the Vice chairman also added that they were mandated to provide advice to the director of the fisheries commission, which they performed very well. He noted that they even advocated for the commission to be face-lifted which is the case at the moment. 'Our interventions helped to close the gaps between fishermen and the state regulators as well', he added. He concluded his speech with the fact that the group's capacity has been enhanced to be able to analyze the fisheries laws.

John Dickson Eshun, a member of the W/R FWG, added his voice and noted that the group has encouraged co-management of the fisheries sector in the W/R. He added that they went to the extent of interacting with the oil companies thereby reducing conflict between oil vessels and fishery vessels. 'We also advocated for the hiring of fisheries liaison officers by the oil

companies, and currently some fishermen have been employed to serve in the capacity as fisheries liaison officers', he concluded.



Figure 5 Members of W/R FWG sharing experiences with participants

After this experience sharing, Nicholas Smith of CEWEFIA introduced his organization as an implementing member of the SFMP and briefed the participants on some activities they would be carrying out.



Figure 6 Nicholas Smith of CEWEFIA informing participants about CEWEFIA's participation in SFMP

CLOSURE

The meeting ended with participants showing a high level of readiness to be engaged in the project. A closing prayer was said by one of the participants.