



# SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

## Report On DAA Members Annual Meeting with Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development



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## **ACRONYMS**

CRC	Coastal Resource Center
DAA	Development Action Association
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Development Action Association (DAA) is a local partner of the USAID funded SFMP project. DAA is made up of 13 Associations. Annually, representatives of these associations led by the Executive Director, visit the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development to brief her on the progress the association are making, present their challenges and seek the Ministry's support.

This year about 30 representatives met the Chief Director of Fisheries as the Minister and her Deputy had both traveled. They discussed issues affecting their livelihoods such as sand winning, limited supply of premix fuel and illegal fishing practices. The Director pledged the Ministry's support to solve some of the issues presented.

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

The objective of SFMP is to support the efforts of the government of Ghana to rebuild its marine fish stocks through the adoption of responsible fishing practices. The Development Action Association is a partner on the SFMP project working with 13 associations in communities in the Central and Western Regions.

As part of its interventions with the various associations, is the annual encounter with the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. This platform is an opportunity for selected members of each of the 13 associations to brief the minister on their activities, the progress they are making and the challenges they face.

### **1.1 Objective**

To objectives of the meeting was brief with the Minister of MoFAD on the progress and challenges the Fishing Associations working with DAA are facing in the pursuit of their economic activities.

### **1.2 Expected Outcome**

The expected outcome of the meeting is that the MoFAD will support the associations to address some of the challenges they face and also acknowledge their contributions to the fisheries sector.

## **SECTION 2: THE MEETING**

In May 2018, 30 people (made up of 1 person from each of the 13 associations, the president and vice of each of the associations, selected staff and community liaison officers) went to the MoFAD for their annual briefing with the Minister led by the Executive Director of DAA, Madam Lydia Sasu.

At the Ministry, the team were met by the Chief Director of Fisheries Professor Francis Nunoo, as the Minister and her Deputy were both out of town. The Executive Director of DAA, Mrs. Lydia Sasu after exchanging pleasantries with the Chief Director gave a brief history and purpose of the visit. She initiated that the members of the association have always used their annual tete a tete with the Minister to update her on the drastic decline in marine fish stocks and advocate for an improvement in the regulation of fishing practices. This is because most of the members of the association are women who are also household heads, and so a collapse of the industry will mean a collapse of their livelihoods.

She enumerated some of the challenges they were encountering as;

The use of light in fishing. According to them fish harvest with light are sold cheaper than those harvest with best practice. This means that for the members of the association who are trained to reject fish harvest with light they are not able to sell their produce competitively and end up losing out on any profits, especially as consumers do not know the difference. In response the Chief Director, said that the Ministry was instituting measure to register all artisanal canoes and have them embossed for easy identification. She asked the women to act as watchmen and report all forms of illegal fishing practices to the Ministry.

Another challenge raised by one of the members was the fact that the sea was gradually encroaching on the coast eroding the landing sites in Winneba, making it difficult to land canoes. He therefore called for the support of the government to construct a defense wall at the site. The Chief Director responded that government had awarded contracts for the construction for sea defense in Mumford and Moree and other communities will also be considered soon.

The team also pleaded with the Chief Director to ensure the enforcement of laws that prevent fishing vessels from encroaching on the territory of the artisanal canoes. He also asked for the government to support the fishermen with subsidized nets and outboard motors. The Chief Director assured them of the government's commitment to penalize vessels that flout the laws.

The women also asked for support with micro credit to enable them expand their businesses. To this the Chief Director advised them to form cooperatives and save among themselves, as they defaulted on loans given to them with government support.

They also expressed concern about the effect of the spill from the Weija dam. According to the plastic waste from the dam kills the oysters in the lagoon during the perennial spill. This affects the livelihoods of the oyster pickers. The Director blamed irresponsible citizens and some waste management companies for this menace and promised to collaborate with other agencies to solve their problem.

The women also complained sand winning at Moree is endangering the homes of the residents and asked for the support of ministry and other law enforcement agencies to check this. The Director assured them that the ministry will collaborate with the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources to ensure permanent solution.

“The team also complained of limited supply of subsidized premix fuel in Dzemeni in the Volta Region, compelling canoe owners to buy fuel on the open market at higher prices leading to high production costs. The Director again promised to investigate the issue and find a solution to it.

The team also asked for the support for the installation of more fish drying racks in Apam, so that the processors will not dry fish on the ground. The also appealed for help to secure their land in Akosua village

Finally, the chief Director also told them of new policies being initiated by the government to address the issues in the fishing industry. According to him the sea will be closed in the Month of August which is the spawning period for small pelagics. This he said will enforce through the deployment of the police and the Ghana Navy. He therefore charged the associations to support this government directive to replenish the declining stocks...

the whole month of August, the sea will be closed from all fishing activities and complete

### **SECTION 3: CONCLUSION**

The women really enjoyed the fruitful discussions with the Chief Director and assured him of their continuous support. The Director on the other hand, thanked the associations for ‘keeping the Ministry on its toes’ and promised to find solutions in all the issues presented to him.