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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Implementation of Pra Fisheries Co- mgt: Inauguration of reconstituted Pra Fisheries Co-management Committee



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Cover photo: Picture of the District Chief Executive of Shama District inaugurating the reconstituted co-management committee. Together with the committee members are some members of the advisory group

Photo credit: Philip Prah, FoN

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ACRONYMS

EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FoN	Friends of the Nation
SDA	Shama District Assembly
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

To ensure the effective implementation of the Pra Fisheries Co-management plan, a Fisheries Co-management committee was constituted in SFMP year 3. However, the committee formed did not have representatives from all the communities within the management area along the Pra river.

Therefore, consultative meetings were organized to mobilize representatives from the remaining communities to ensure that all communities are represented on the Co-management committee.

During these engagements each community nominated their representatives to be part of the co-management committee. The Shama District Assembly facilitated re-inauguration of the co-management committee to introduce the new members to stakeholders and the public. An advisory board which comprises of representatives from the Shama District Assembly, Fisheries Commission, Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency and Shama Traditional Council was also formed and presented to stakeholder. In all 119 stakeholders participated in the inauguration ceremony; 27 being females and 92 being males. Key stakeholders comprising of traditional leaders, officials from the Shama District Assembly, Assembly and Unit committee members, Fishermen, Fishmongers (women), Fish processors, Traditional leaders, Opinion leaders, Mangrove harvesters, and youths represented communities in the 6 area councils in the district. Representatives from Fisheries Commission, Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, as well as the media also participated.

The committee will be registered with the District Assembly as a community-based group and also a series of capacity building workshop will be organized for them to build their capacity to implement the activities in the Fisheries Co-Management Plan.

1.1 Background

Early 2017, Friends of the Nation, as part of its activities under the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) facilitated the formation of a co-management committee for the management of the fisheries. The Pra Estuary Fisheries Co-management committee was constituted as part of an agenda to manage the fisheries resources in the Pra estuarine and riverine system. It was inaugurated by the Shama District Assembly together with traditional leaders in the district. Unfortunately, the committee was represented by only two communities in the district. Meanwhile, about 11 main communities have been recognized to obtain their livelihoods from the Pra estuarine and riverine system. It was therefore imperative to reconstitute the committee to include representatives from all these 11 main communities.

Socialization exercises to inform communities on the content of a draft co-management plan were conducted in the months of November and December 2017. As part of these engagements, communities nominated their representatives to reconstitute the co-management committee. Since most people in the district are familiar with the old committee, the district assembly deemed it fit to inaugurate this new committee and inform the public of the new committee.

On December 22, 2017, the reconstituted 11-member co-management committee (10 males and 1 female) was officially introduced and inaugurated to stakeholders in the Shama District. 119 stakeholders participated in the inauguration ceremony; 27 being females and 92 being males. Key stakeholders comprising of traditional leaders, officials from the Shama District Assembly, assembly and unit committee members, fishermen, fishmongers (women),

fish processors, traditional leaders, opinion leaders, mangrove harvesters, and youths represented communities in the 6 area councils in the district. Representatives from Fisheries Commission, Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, as well as the media also participated.

SECTION 2: DETAILED SESSION

It was expected that this official introduction and inauguration exercise will

- Inform the general public of Shama about the reconstituted Pra fisheries co-management committee
- Inform participants of the content of the draft fisheries co-management plan.
- Unveil an advisory board for the management of the Pra estuary fisheries co-management

2.1 Overview of SFMP and Update of Fisheries Co-management

Theophilus Boachie-Yiadom, of FoN, gave a background to the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project and also, the ongoing activities at the Pra Estuary regarding the management of fisheries resources. He informed that The USAID-funded Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) is a five-year project (2014 -2019) with the goal of rebuilding targeted marine fish stocks that have seen major declines in landings over the last decade, particularly the small pelagic fisheries that are important for food security and are the mainstay of the small-scale fishing sector. He added that the riverine fisheries and ecosystem contribute immensely to marine fisheries.

In his delivery, Mr. Boachie-Yiadom sensitized stakeholders on how estuaries are of importance to fisheries both riverine and marine. In view of this, he added that 11 communities within the Pra Estuarine area have been thoroughly engaged in the quest to sustainably manage fisheries resources. He informed that the first committee that was formed and inaugurated by the DCE led the facilitation of the formation of this second committee which from now will be considered the legal body to manage the fisheries at the community level. He applauded the efforts and contribution of the first committee members who helped in the community engagements by gathering relevant information and contributing to the drafting of the Fisheries Management Plan, as well as playing vital role in reconstituting the fisheries co-management committee.



Figure 1. Theophilus Boachie-Yiadom delivering his opening remarks

2.2 Content of Draft Pra Fisheries Co-Management Plan

Some salient points were shared from the draft fisheries co-management plan, using maps from the plan. The discussions centered on key management options including seasonal closure and permanent closure of identified areas. These areas were identified and approved by majority of community members.

In addition, fines to control offenses, as suggested by community members were shared. This included the following:

- First offenders will be warned and sensitized
- Second offenders will be fined up to GHC500.00
- Third offenders will have all their equipment confiscated

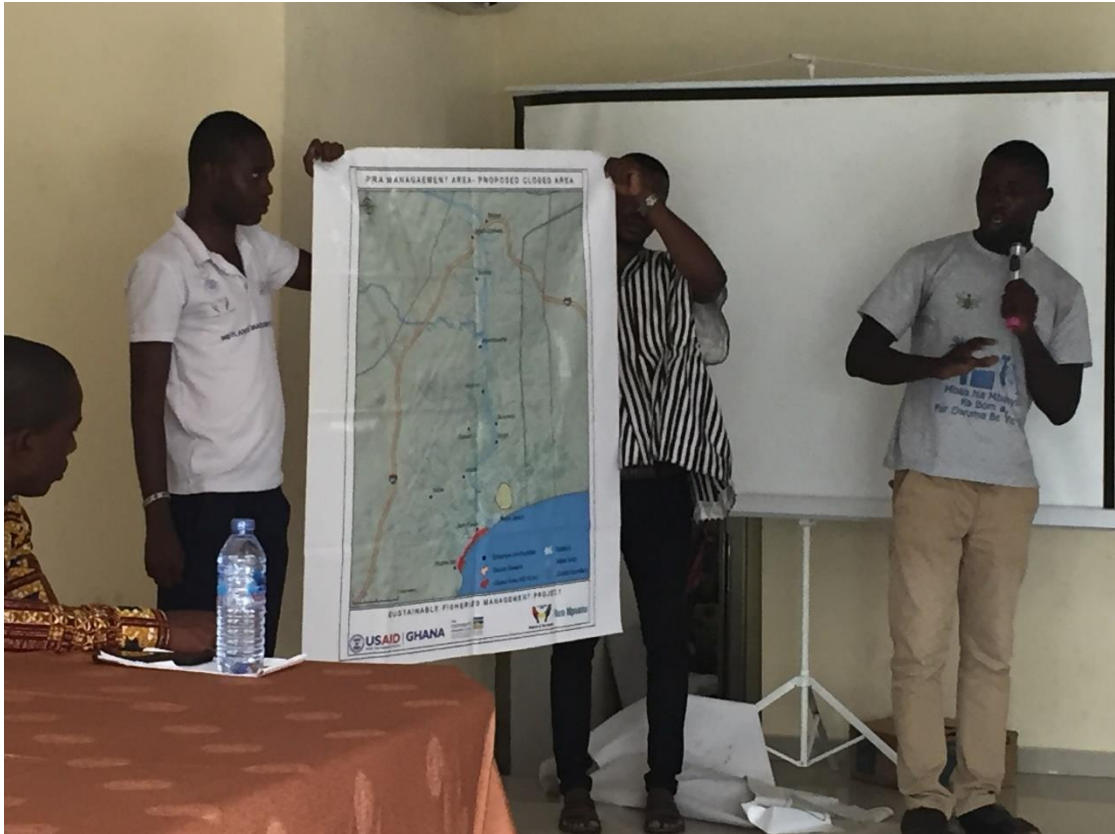


Figure 2: Philip Prah (FoN) explaining the co-management maps to stakeholders

2.3 Dissolution of Previous Committee and Official Announcement of Advisory Board

The previous committee was dissolved by the DCE, after congratulating them for the great efforts they have exerted in executing their mandates. He informed that committee though dissolved, will have the opportunity to serve as advisory board members. He then used the opportunity to announce members of the advisory board. They include representatives of the old committee, the Shama District Assembly, Fisheries Commission, Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency and Traditional Authority. They will provide technical support and serve in an advisory capacity.



Figure 3: Hon Joseph Amoah, DCE congratulating the chairman of the dissolved co-management committee

2.4 Inauguration of Reconstituted Co-Management Committee

The 11-member reconstituted co-management committee representing their community members in their various communities, was officially inaugurated by Hon. Joseph Amoah, DCE of Shama District. He advised them to fully take up the mantle and continue from where the dissolved one left off. He encouraged them that their work is also in line with the development agenda of the district and he believes that they will be able to help in the management of the fisheries resources.

The chairman of the dissolved committee, Hon. David Koomson, also encouraged the committee that they should not lose hope and be determined since the work is strictly volunteerism. He assured them that the advisory board will ensure their maximum support is given to the committee for them to work efficiently and effectively.



Figure 4: Hon Joseph Amoah, DCE, inaugurating the reconstituted co-management committee

SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

- An integrated fisheries governance workshop will be held for the advisory board and the reconstituted committee, to familiarize themselves well and chart a way forward towards implementation of the co-management plan.
- The committee will also be registered with the district assembly, as a community-based group

ANNEX



Figure 5: Chairman of the dissolved co-management committee facilitating the election of executives of the reconstituted co-management committee



Figure 6: reconstituted co-management committee electing their executives