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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Report On 32nd Municipal and District Farmers' Day Celebrations (Ga East Municipal, Efutu Municipal and Gomoa West District)



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SNV: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/ghana>

ACRONYMS

CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CRC	Coastal Resource Center
DAA	Development Action Association
DQF	Daasgift Quality Foundation
FtF	Feed the Future
HM	Hen Mpoano
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The national Farmers' Day celebration which is marked on the first Friday in December every year was instituted by the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) government in 1985, in recognition of the vital role farmers and fishermen play in the economy. In view of this, Development Action Association (DAA) which is a farmers' organization and a local implementing partner of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) participated in the Farmers' Day event organized in the Ga South Municipal, Efutu Municipal and Gomoa West District Assemblies in the Greater Accra and Central regions of Ghana respectively, with a call to all especially fisher folks to adopt and practise responsible fishing and fishing methods by saying "NO TO BAD FISH". The 2016 Farmers' Day took place on 4th November 2016 instead of the usual first Friday of December, due to the national elections which was to come on the 7th of December 2016. The theme for this year's event was "Agriculture; a business response to economic growth". The theme emphasized the importance of agriculture as a commercial establishment/profession that can create the needed profitable growth as well as improve living standards of farmers, fishers, processors etc. and the nation as a whole.

1. BACKGROUND

The work of fishermen and fish processors has attracted less attention during the Farmers' Day celebrations in the various districts that Development Action Association works in. Studies showed that fishermen continue to use crude methods in trapping fish, a situation that greatly contributed to the dwindling fortunes of the fishing industry. There are more than two million fishermen, fish processors and other stakeholders in the fisheries sector who, together with their dependents, constitute 10 per cent of the national population. The dwindling fortunes of this sector imply that the livelihood of this significant percentage of the population will be affected adversely if key steps are not taken to reverse the trend. In view of this DAA, under the SFMP project has advocated for safe fishing and processing practices and has pushed for the recognition of individuals who practice hygienic processing of fish during the Farmers' and Fishers' day celebrations.

Objectives

The objectives for participating and supporting the Farmers' and Fishers' Day celebrations are to

- Take the opportunity to publicize the SFMP project and sensitize the public on the effects of IUU fishing.
- Appreciate and reward the players in agriculture as root for economic growth
- Serve as a platform for DAA women processors to exhibit their hygienic ways of packaging fish and fish products for the markets which they have acquired so far under the SFMP project.

Expected outcomes

Expected outcomes from participating and supporting include:

- Creating awareness for government to give equal attention to the fishing industry like the agricultural sector.
- Promoting and creating market for products produced by the various Fish Processor Groups.

2. CELEBRATIONS AT THE VARIOUS MUNICIPAL AND DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES

Ga South Municipal Assembly, Greater Accra

The call was made at the Municipal level in Tuba in the Ga South Municipal Assembly, as part of a year-long advocacy campaign on sensitizing fisher folks and the general public on the need to adopt and practise fishing methods that will help boost the dwindling marine stocks.

Delivering the keynote address, the Municipal Chief Executive Officer of Ga South, Hon. Nii Akwai Jerry Thompson, emphasized how unapproved methods of fishing such as the use of light, dynamite, small sized nets and other illegal methods can destroy the sea by reducing fish stocks and affecting livelihoods of families, especially women and children. He urged fishermen and other fisher folks to set up their own watchdog committees at the landing sites to curb these bad practices.

In a speech read by a fish processor, she emphasized on the efforts of all resource users in the fisheries' value chain to put their hands on deck to say No to Bad Fish and Bad Fishing practices.

Madam Cecilia Agbeshi was adjudged the best fish processor in the municipal district.



Figure 1. Madam Cecilia Agbeshie receiving her certificate as best fish processor in the Ga South Municipal from Rev. Samuel Quaye

Efutu Municipal Assembly, Central Region

The event in the Efutu Municipal was held at the Challenging Heights Park in Winneba. The Municipal MOFA director (Mr. Hope Kuma), speaking on the theme of the 32nd Farmers' Day stressed the need to encourage farmers and fishermen to see themselves as business people and should be proud of themselves as they promote food security and contribute to the national income.

He said that in recent decades, agriculture contributed between 6% and 8% to Ghana's GDP and was quite commendable. He therefore encouraged the agriculture sector to delve into establishing strong commodity value chains, strengthen linkages within the chains to make them add value to their products so they can become competitive, so as to access several local and foreign markets. He also called for the need to establish more commodity markets in municipalities and districts to cater for the production. This will help broaden the income base of the farmers and the revenue base of the Assembly.

Present during the celebrations were various organizations, individuals, corporate entities and food vendors who displayed their products. The Administration and Communication Assistant of Development Action Association (DAA), Miss Adwoa Agyeiwaa Akoto said that the fisheries sector is one of the important sectors of the Ghanaian economy. However, Ghana's fisheries has experienced drastic decline in the last decade due to the practice of illegal and unsustainable fishing practices. According to her, these illegal methods including the use of light, undersized mesh and chemicals result in the harvest of unwholesome fish which is dangerous and also cause loss of income on the part of fish processors. She therefore entreated the public to say no to bad fish.

Madam Ama Esalkado was adjudged the best fish processor in the Municipal. She is a member of the Osakam Fish Processors group who are members of DAA and have benefited from the hygienic fish handling training funded by USAID under the SFMP.



Figure 2. Madam Ama Esalkado, best fish processor in the Efutu Municipal Assembly

Gomoa West District Assembly, Central Region

The District Chief Executive (Honorable Theophilus Aidoo-Mensah) congratulated farmers and encouraged them to take agriculture as a business since it is the root for economic growth

at Gomoa Mankesim in the Central region. He entreated the farmers to apply chemicals in the right proportions to produce healthy food for the market. The Chief Executive encouraged the youth to take farming as a business to help reduce unemployment in the country.

The Honorable Member gave fishers the assurance that he will ensure equal attention is given to the fisheries sector as the crops sector in the district, especially the plea of fish processors to totally say no to illegal fish. Mr. Peter Edzie was adjudged the best district fish processor from the Adom nsa Fish Processors group who are members of DAA and have also benefited from the hygienic fish handling training funded by USAID under the SFMP.



Figure 3. Mr. Peter Edzie receiving his award for best fish processor in the district.



Figure 4. Cross section of some items on display at the Farmers' Day program in Winneba

3. CONCLUSIONS

DAA, through the celebration, has been able to communicate concerns of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing to stakeholders and Government officials. This was done with the hope that government will take up the concerns raised on IUU and assist to improve the marine fisheries stock and the livelihood of fishers.