



SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

World Fish Day 2016



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Cover photo: Signed F2F compact (Credit: Patricia Mensah)

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ACRONYMS

DQF	Daasgift Quality Foundation
F2F	Fisherman to Fisherman
GIFA	Ghana Inshore Fishermen's Association
GITA	Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council
HM	Hen Mpoano
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NAFPTA	National Fish Processors and Traders Association
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SSG	SSG Advisors
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFD	World Fisheries Day

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INTRODUCTION

World Fisheries Day -- established in 1998 and celebrated each year on November 21- highlights the importance of conserving the ocean and marine life. The Day was established to draw attention to overfishing, habitat destruction and other serious threats to the sustainability of the marine and freshwater resources

EVENT CELEBRATION IN CAPE COAST

This year's *World Fisheries Day* was celebrated by fisherfolks represented by the major fisheries associations of Ghana on Tuesday November 22nd, 2016 in Cape Coast. The Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCF) led the organization of the event in partnerships with the following associations:

- Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association (GIFA)
- Ghana Industrial Fisheries Association (GITA)
- National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA)

The Sustainable Fisheries Management Project sponsored the event with the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and the Fisheries Commission (FC).

The theme chosen for the event was: "Empowering fisherfolks for sustainable Fisheries".

The major association of fisherfolks in Ghana have developed a program under the sponsorship of the USAID/Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP), to initiate a *fishermen to fishermen* dialogue to walk the line toward the implementation of the national fisheries management plan (2015-2019). This initiative named "*F2F*" is a way for fisherfolks to meet their responsibilities in managing the fisheries resources in a manner consistent with the government policies. This is a commitment by fisherfolks to work together and achieve high degree of voluntary compliance and begin to charter a way to be a true partner in fisheries management and decision making process. This will assist the government in the substantial regulatory responsibilities to achieve the goals chartered in the national fisheries management plan (2015-2019). The heads of the major fisheries associations have already began a process for developing a strategy toward changing the attitude and the behavior of their fellow fisherfolks in order to rebuild fisheries resources in Ghana.

The professional fisheries association of Ghana wish to highlight the problems facing the fishery sector and show their commitment to take the necessary responsibility to comply with existing fisheries laws and regulations in collaboration with the Fisheries Commission and other fisheries stakeholders. The goal of this engagement is to create conditions for a long-term fisheries co-management program to enhance artisanal fisheries for food security and to improve the socio-economic situation of fisherfolks within the context of sustainable fisheries management goals set by the national fisheries management plan (2015-2019). Fisherfolks will demonstrate their wiliness to bear the burden for additional measures and restrictions on fishing to allow the fisheries resources to recover for the benefit of all Ghanaians. However they will call on the authorities and other fisheries stakeholders to assist with the alleviation of this burden to prevent poor and disadvantaged fisherfolks to make ends meet.

The action will focus on a traditional and local methods based on the long standing and recognized social order within fishing communities lead by the Chief Fishermen. In this context, fisherfolks will lead the organization and the facilitation of dialogues between fishermen *F2F* and organize its members to be able to address the expected responsibilities in fisheries resource management. The WFD event was chosen to start up the *F2F* initiative. A series of radio programs were organized in various coastal communities to sensitize them on

the importance of adopting responsible fishing practices while informing them on the status of Ghana's fish stocks and the need to manage it sustainably. Representatives of GNCFC, NAFPTA and GIFA lead various discussions on voluntary compliance and the need to take responsibility for the depleting of the stock. They conveyed a message to their colleague fishfolks to stop the blame game and work together to manage and recover the depleted stocks. These series of programs preceded the main event which was scheduled for November 22 instead of the globally recognized date of November 21, because Tuesdays are the traditional fishing holidays for the artisanal fishers in Ghana.

The event started with a photo exhibition of the project's activities and value added fish. The paramount chief of Cape Coast, who chaired the event, gave the welcome remarks highlighting the significant contribution of fish to the region and the need to sustainably manage it. This was followed by brief speeches from MOFAD/FC, GNCFC, GIFA, NAFPTA and GITA. The speeches underscored the importance of fisheries to Ghana's economy and food security, contribution to employment and livelihood of the coastal communities who depend largely on the resource for survival. They emphasized on the current status of Ghana's fisheries which is on the verge of collapse and the need to adopt management measures to rebuild and sustainably manage it. The various stakeholders highlighted on the need to stop business as usual, the blame game, take politics out of fisheries and adopt responsible fisheries practices. The NAFPTA group stressed on their stance to reject bad fish while admonishing their fishermen against using chemical and other illegal means to catch fish. They attributed their current plight of low market and huge operational cost to bad fish and juveniles.

In attendance were 80 Chief Fishermen of the GNCFC, 45 women of the National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA), a representative of Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association (GIFA), Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association (GITA), academia and other stakeholders as well as locals from the community.

The event provided a platform for the four (4) major stakeholders to accept responsibility for depletion of the fish stocks and pledge their readiness to combat IUU, promote responsible fishing, make women integral part of decision-making and assist Fisheries Commission (FC) in implementation of the NFMP. A symbolic compact was later signed by the stakeholders to



Figure 1. Fisherfolks palm print the compact as a sign of their commitment to adopt responsible fishing measures

affirm their commitment to the compact and readiness to assist the FC. The Council used the *World Fisheries Day* event to kick start the F2F and will carry out a series of meetings and

workshops to develop a final resolution committing fisherfolks to fulfill fisheries management responsibilities vis-à-vis the national fisheries management plan. The end result will be a signed National Resolution signed by fishermen and Chief Fisherman to comply with the measures and create an implementation and monitoring plans.

Skit

A drama group from the council performed a skit demonstrating the link among the various stakeholders; particularly the artisanal, semi-industrial and the industrial fisheries in the country and how they have contributed to the depletion of the stocks. In the drama, the canoe fleet used small mesh size nets and chemical for fishing, semi-industrial used light fishing technique while the industrial used illegal nets for fishing. The lack of fish in the homes of the various families led to conflicts, poverty and unemployment. All the stakeholders conceded that their actions have contributed to the collapsed stocks and therefore the need to collaborate in implementing management measures aimed at rebuilding the stocks

The event ended with a Tug of peace to signify the unity and collaboration amongst the stakeholders to support the FC in implementing management measures aimed at rebuilding the fish stocks.



Figure 2. Skit showing how irresponsible fishing activity has contributed to the depleted stocks