

Fisheries Communiqué

Communiqué issued at the end of a Roundtable Meeting on Voluntary Compliance of Fisheries Laws: Act 625 and LI 1968

We, stakeholders in the fisheries sector in the Western region, gathered and having participated in a roundtable meeting on the theme **ADDRESSING CHALLENGES OF COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OF FISHERIES LAWS** on this day, May 28 2013 at the SSNIT Conference room, Takoradi, organized by the Western Region Fisheries Working Group with support from USAID, CRC and Friends of the Nation,

Observed that:

1. Fisheries resources impacts directly on coastal livelihoods and the public at large and assessing its current state that has risen from dwindling stocks due to natural causes, open access and illegal practices, the industry faces challenges that poses a threat to its sustainability, coastal livelihoods and food security.
2. Fishers were consulted in the promulgation of Fisheries Regulations and thereafter intensively educated on the ecological justification for the Regulation
3. There are implications of the Regulations on the industry.
4. There is increasing use of chemicals amongst fishers
5. The use of chemicals in fishing has implications on human and marine health. and is impacting on incomes and value-addition efforts by fish mongers and processors
6. The present predicaments of the industry are due to illegal practices, non-compliance of Fisheries Act 625 of 2002 and LI 1968 of 2010 and polarization.

We thereby resolved as follows: that

1. There should be an immediate halt to illegal practices like the use of obnoxious chemicals, unapproved gears and fish aggregating devices such as light for fishing.
2. Fishers should with immediate effect comply with Fisheries Act 625 of 2002 and LI 1968 of 2010

Dialogue with the Fisheries Commission and the Ministry on sustainable strategies for the enforcement of the Law to deal with the implications as well.

4. Fishmongers should refuse to fund illegal fishing expeditions and refuse to purchase any illegally-caught fish landed at the beaches.
5. Fishers to report any illegalities in the fishing industry to the appropriate authorities
6. Political interferences and polarization of the sector is to be discouraged

Accordingly, we recommend to the Government of Ghana that it should formulate the necessary legal and institutional framework that would promote co-management in the sector and the creation of Marine Protected Areas.

In furtherance, the Government of Ghana should introduce detective devices to identify chemically-caught fish, in addition to more appropriate and affordable gears to address any implications of the implementation of the Regulation

Finally, Government of Ghana to show commitment by supporting fishers to set aside a day to commemorate the ban of prohibited gears in fisheries.

Agreed and Issued on behalf of:

- Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council . W/R
- Western Region Fishmongers (Nkonkonhema) Association
- Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association . W/R
- Ghana Trawlers Association . W/R
- All Participants

The Fisheries Working Group comprise of Fisher groups and representatives of state regulatory agencies like Ghana Navy, Ghana Airforce, Marine Unit of the Ghana Police Service, Environmental Protection Agency and the Attorney General's Dept. that serve as an advisory body to the Western Region Directorate of the Fisheries Commission.

Signed by all participants in attendance and issued on this day, May 28 2013