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# **SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)**

## **FWG Regional Meeting with GNCFC on NFMP with Canoe Owners, etc.**



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THE  
**UNIVERSITY  
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**Cover photo:** Cross-section of participants made of key stakeholders from the GNCFC, Fisheries Commission, Canoe Owners, etc.

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## **ACRONYMS**

CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
FEU	Fisheries Enforcement Unit
FoN	Friends of the Nation
FWG	Fisheries Working Group
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NFMP	National Development Planning Commission
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On April 20<sup>th</sup> 2018, FoN facilitated a meeting between selected members of Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council Western Region, including Hook and Line Fishermen, Canoe Owners, crew members, etc. also officials of the Fisheries Commission and the Fisheries Enforcement Unit were at the meeting to provide relevant information to the fishers. In all sixty-eight (68) participants participated in the meeting made up of sixty-four (65) male and three (3) females.

This meeting especially provided an important platform to engage the Canoe/Gear Owners, Boat/Canoe Captains, Service Boys and crew members on the fisheries management plan and the fisheries Legislation review. The meeting created the platform for the officials of Fisheries Commission-Western Region to inform participants on the current status for the implementation of the NFMP including the closed season, canoe registration and embossment.

Participants were also taken through the draft New Fisheries Bill for Ghana and the content of the future fisheries laws. This created the platform for participants to make input on areas of interest, concerns on sections or clauses in the existing regulation that was problematic. The meeting was also used to collate their practical knowledge for sections of the law on IUU, etc.

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## **SECTION 1 BACKGROUND**

The multi-stakeholder dimension of the constitution of the FWG places it on a good platform to play an advisory role to the Fisheries Commission, as spelt out in the mandate of the FWG. The MoFAD and the Fisheries Commission have developed the NFMP, which is bounded by law, [Fisheries Act 625 Section 42 (1)], aimed at providing a strategic framework for revising the declining trend of fish resources and establishing sound management regime to ensure that fish stocks are exploited sustainably in an enhanced environment.

On April 20<sup>th</sup> 2018, FoN facilitated a meeting between selected members of Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council Western Region, including Hook and Line Fishermen, Canoe Owners, crew members, etc. also officials of the Fisheries Commission and the Fisheries Enforcement Unit were at the meeting to provide relevant information to the fishers. In all sixty-eight (68) participants participated in the meeting made up of sixty-four (65) male and three (3) females. The meeting provided an important platform to engage the Canoe/Gear Owners, Boat/Canoe Captains, Service Boys and crew members on the fisheries management plan and the fisheries Legislation review. The meeting created the platform for the officials of Fisheries Commission-Western Region to inform participants on the current status for the implementation of the NFMP including the closed season, canoe registration and embossment.

### **1.1 Workshop Objectives**

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Determine what is understood about the nature and extent of the events discuss and share experiences and concerns on the implementation of the National Marine Fisheries Management Plan.
- Discuss and propose what the content of the future fisheries laws should be.

## **SECTION 2 DETAILED SESSION**

The Canoe/Gear Owners, Boat/Canoe Captains, Service Boys and crew members etc. are the key influences of the day-to-day fishing practices, they determine and regulate the fishing practices whether use of legal or illegal methods. These very important group of fishers could actively contribute to the adoption of responsible fishing and contribute immensely to rebuild the Small Pelagics fish stocks. However, though they are very important group; Fisheries Commission has not engaged these groups adequately also SFMP project has had very limited engagement with such groups. This meeting therefore provided the opportunity for new ground coverage for the USAID/SFMP project for year 4 as the project skew more on performance and new approaches to achieve responsible fishing to contribute to rebuilding of the Small pelagics fish stock.



## **2.1 Statement from GNCFC**

Nana Kojo Konduah, Chairman of the Western Region GNCFC addressed participants that the SFMP project seeks to rebuild targeted fish stocks through the adoption of sustainable fishing methods, and eventually bring profitability to the fishery industry in Ghana. He therefore advised all participants to ensure they identify how each stakeholder could contribute to the successful implementation of the NFMP. The NFMP has less than two more years to be reviewed. There is the need for more communication. There is the need for the associations to meet and further discuss what actions to take to ensure that majority of the actions in the plan are implemented.

## **2.2 Statement from Fisheries Commission**

Mr. Alex Sarbah, Western Region Director of the Fisheries Commission shared with stakeholders that the industrial vessels ended the 2018 Closed Season period which started from January to February. He shared that the preparation of the NFMP as stated in Section 42 (1) of the Fisheries Act of 2002 (Act 625) is to help rebuild fish stock to enhance the socio-economic conditions of fishing communities, and improve food security. The implementation of the closed season is part of the measure in reducing fishing effort and capacity.

Scaling down to the reduction effort and capacity for the artisanal or canoe fishery, he shared that canoe registration and embossment exercise have been implemented. He shared that about 80% of canoes in Western Region have been registered. The major challenge is with the embossment of numbers on canoes. He urged chief fishermen to ensure that their fishermen emboss their numbers on their canoes to avoid being confronted by the Fisheries Enforcement Unit offshore.

# **SECTION 3 DISCUSSIONS**

Discussions were centered on the measures for artisanal/canoe fishery in the NFMP as well as the future fisheries law.

## **3.1 NFMP Measures for Artisanal/Canoe Fishery**

Fishing Holidays that is increasing the traditional one day per week fishing holidays to two days per week. Sunday is the most agreed day but stakeholders complained about the non-compliance to the existing fishing holidays. As to what time the existing fishing holiday(s) start and end was another issue. Nana Ebambey, Chief Fisherman of Asanta shared that his area is more often beach seine fishing and for them, from 6pm on Tuesday, anyone can go fishing.

It was suggested that the GNCFC should appropriately document all fishing holidays across the coastal belt, clearly spell out the time the fishing holiday starts and ends which will eventually help in effective enforcement. They also suggest that the additional fishing holiday together with the existing should be sent to parliament and be passed as law.

Nana Ebambey, also emphasised that every chief fisherman knows all the type of fishing and the fishing nets used at his landing beach. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every chief

fisherman to ensure that the right mesh size is used. He admitted that, Asanta fishing community uses 1 inch mesh size for the sack of the beach seine nets even though it is clearly stated in the fisheries laws that it should be 2 inches and above. He also called on the Fisheries Commission to regularly educate chief fishermen and fishermen because he as a chief fisherman thought it was 1 inch. He now knows it is illegal and will share with his community members.

### **3.2 Future Fisheries Law**

Kyei Kwadwo Yamoah shared that the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) have indicated that after 16- years of the passage of the parent fisheries law, Act 625 in 2002 and the accompanying regulations have emerged that require a review of Ghana's Fisheries Act 625 to reflect the new trends. MOFAD has further indicated that the Act 625 is faced with inadequacies in several respect and has not been adequate to address several forms of IUU fishing.

Fisheries stakeholders have also complained about the weaknesses of the Fisheries Laws and Regulations (Act 625 of 2002, LI 1968, Act 880, etc.) to address current and emerging trend of fisheries governance. Other weakness identified by stakeholders include enforcement and prosecution weaknesses, where the current Fisheries Act 625 and associated regulations have not been adequate to support successful prosecution in some cases. Also stakeholders including Fishers, Traditional Leaders, CSOs, Media, etc. have complained about poor stakeholders' consultation during the enactment of the Act 625 and the others fisheries laws.

Nana Kofi Bentil, Chief Fisherman of Lower Axim suggested to the GNCFC of hiring a lawyer or legal advisor that will assist to understand and make inputs to the drafting instructions.

## FIGURES



**Figure 1 Nana Kojo Konduah delivering his statement**



**Figure 2 Mr Alex Sarbah addressing participants**





**Figure 3 Kyei Kwadwo Yamoah sharing some key information in the NFMP**



**Figure 4 Nana Bentil, chief fisherman of Axim making his inputs**



**Figure 5 FEU officer Opambour making his submission**

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The meeting created the platform for the officials of Fisheries Commission-Western Region to inform participants on the current status for the implementation of the NFMP including the closed season, canoe registration and embossment. Facilitation at the meeting enhanced rich exchange of information and consensus building among the fishers. The meeting also provided the platform for the fishers to build consensus and consolidate support for the implementation of the Fisheries Management Plan; especially on the registration of canoes, moratorium for canoes and Additional holiday for the canoes.

Participants were also taken through the draft New Fisheries Bill for Ghana and the content of the future fisheries laws. This created the platform for participants to make input on areas of interest, concerns on sections or clauses in the existing regulation that was problematic. The meeting was also used to collate their practical knowledge for sections of the law on IUU, etc.