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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

URI President's Visit to Friends of the Nation and the Western Region



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THE
UNIVERSITY
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Friends of the Nation

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Cover photo: President of the University of Rhode Island and team members in a canoe on the Pra River (Credit: Theophilus Boachie-Yiadom)

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ACRONYMS

CoP	Chief of Party
DCE	District Chief Executive
FoN	Friends of the Nation
SDA	Shama District Assembly
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
URI	University of Rhode Island

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INTRODUCTION

On Saturday April 16, 2016, the President of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Dr. David Dooley visited Friends of the Nation (FoN) and some of its implementing partners of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP), and were hosted in FoN's conference room. Prior to this, the President and his entourage made a stop at Anlo Beach to observe the mangrove restoration intervention by FoN, the community and the Shama District Assembly (SDA).

FIELD INTERACTIONS

Upon arrival to the field, the president, with his entourage, was briefed on the significance of mangroves to the rebuilding of marine fisheries stocks. The team interacted with some community mangrove restoration champions who were around to welcome them. Among the benefits derived from the mangrove that were shared with the team are:

- Serves as a breeding/spawning ground to most fish species
- Serves as habitats for several living organisms including aquatic, arboreal and terrestrial animals.
- Serves as fuel wood for fish-smoking and gari processing
- Storm surge
- Helps to minimize incidences of flooding
- Helps to filter water bodies such as rivers and their tributaries



Figure 1 Community champions interacting with the President Dooley (left) and his team.

After some interactions with the community champions, the team trekked along the banks of the Pra River to observe the extent of growth of some replanted mangrove trees. They were informed that the Pra River passes through several regions but joins the sea and forms an estuary in this community called Anlo Beach in the Shama District.

Afterwards, the team was taken on a canoe ride on the Pra River through its tributaries in order that they will have in-depth exposure of the area under restoration.



Figure 2 The President on a canoe ride on the Pra River together with Brian Crawford (CoP of SFMP) and his entourage to observe mangrove restoration sites



Figure 3 Ending the canoe ride just at the estuarine area

Off the canoe, the team went ahead to observe the exact point where the Pra River joins the sea. There is a heap of sand dune in between the river and the sea, which historically is broken by the tidal waves of the sea about every 15 years, creating a virtual island.



Figure 4 The president and his team walking over the sand dune separating the sea and the river

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DISTRICT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

In the course of the field trip, we caught up with the District Chief Executive (DCE) of the district, who was on an inspection rounds checking up with on-going developmental projects in the area. The team then use the opportunity to have a chit-chat with him and his team. After being briefed of SFMP activities in the area, Mr. Eric Cobbinah (the DCE) also briefed the president and his team on the several interventions his outfit has had from FoN. He indicated that the recent intervention is a project on social accountability where the citizens have been empowered to ask the right questions and demand accountability. This he noted as a very important intervention. He was of the opinion that the people need to know exactly what their resources are being used for. For that reason, through FoN's intervention, they have published all the budget and expenditure trend of all physical projects in the district at vantage points within all communities in the district.

The president nodded positively to the information given by the DCE and indicated that his people back in America need to hear such messages from a person like the DCE. It was concluded that there is the need to continue such engagements with partners and ensure sustainable development for the people.



Figure 5 DCE of Shama interacting with the president and his entourage

DISCUSSIONS WITH SFMP PARTNERS

After the field interactions, the team met up with some partners of the SFMP including FoN, Daasgift Quality Foundation, and Hen Mpoano. Each organisation took turns to present to the president and his team the core mandates, operations and function they perform on the SFMP as well as on their own.



Figure 6 SFMP Partners sharing on their various organisations



Figure 7 The president and partners in a group photograph