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JOINING FORCES TO COLLABORATIVELY MANAGE GHANA'S FISHERIES RESOURCES

*The Role of a Fisheries Working Group
August, 2013*



By

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Cover Photo: Members of the Fisheries Working Group interacting with the Deputy Western Regional Minister

Cover Photo Credit: Edward Taylor, Friends of the Nation

List of Acronyms

AG	Attorney General
CRC	Coastal Resources Centre
DDT	Dichloro Diphenyl Trichloroethane
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FoN	Friends of the Nation
FWG	Fisheries Working Group
GCLME	Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem
GMA	Ghana Maritime Authority
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council
ICFG	Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance program
LI	Legislative Instrument
MCS	Monitoring Control and Surveillance
MuGPS	Marine Unit of the Ghana Police Service
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SM	SustainaMetrix
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
ToR	Terms of Reference
URI	University of Rhode Island
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WF	World Fish

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1.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The popular slogan “Hen Mpoano¹” currently rolls on the tongue of every citizen living within any of the 89 coastal communities in the Western Region of Ghana. Thanks to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) which funded a four-year Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance (ICFG) Initiative in the Western Region. The Initiative was implemented through a Cooperative Agreement with the Coastal Resources Center (CRC) at the University of Rhode Island (URI) with Friends of the Nation (FoN), WorldFish Center (WFC) and SustainaMetrix as key implementing partners.

The Initiative contributes to USAID strategic objectives for Biodiversity Conservation and Food Security as well as making significant contributions to Ghana’s National Strategies for Biodiversity and Wetlands Conservation, Climate Change Adaptation, and Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Development. It operates principally in the Western Region, and it was designed to establish strong linkages to governmental coordinating bodies and policy makers at the national level and to the region-wide Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME). The Program activities are concentrated in the six coastal districts of the Region where the communities and the local governments are the intended primary beneficiaries. The goal of the Initiative is to support the government of Ghana in achieving its development objectives of poverty reduction, food security, sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation by contributing to the vision of: *‘Ghana’s coastal and marine ecosystems are sustainably managed to provide goods and services that generate long term socio-economic benefits to communities while sustaining biodiversity.’*

In order to sustain the socio-economic benefits from coastal resources and biodiversity, there was the need for a collaborative approach to management rather than leaving the Fisheries Commission to single handedly manage the fisheries and coastal resources. A Fisheries Working Group (FWG) was therefore catalyzed by the ICFG Initiative. Its members were carefully selected to comprise representatives of Fishers and State Regulators of the fishing industry, to play an advisory role among others to the Fisheries Commission relative to policy and management issues. In addition to this, the FWG sought to address ineffective communications among fishers and stakeholders including the Petroleum industry.

2.0 FORMATION OF THE FISHERIES WORKING GROUP

On January 19, 2011, 11 key stakeholders of the fisheries industry drawn from nine institutions were used to start the Fisheries Working Group. The group was inaugurated by the Chairman of the Fisheries Commission. In all, fifteen meetings have been held since its inception to enhance capacity of the members to execute their mandate as required of them. The formation of the Group centered around the idea that key stakeholders in the fisheries sector could assist by working with and advising the Fisheries Commission on pertinent issues within the sector. The initial constitution of the group is indicated in figure one below.

¹ Hen Mpoano is the Fante Translation of Our Coast

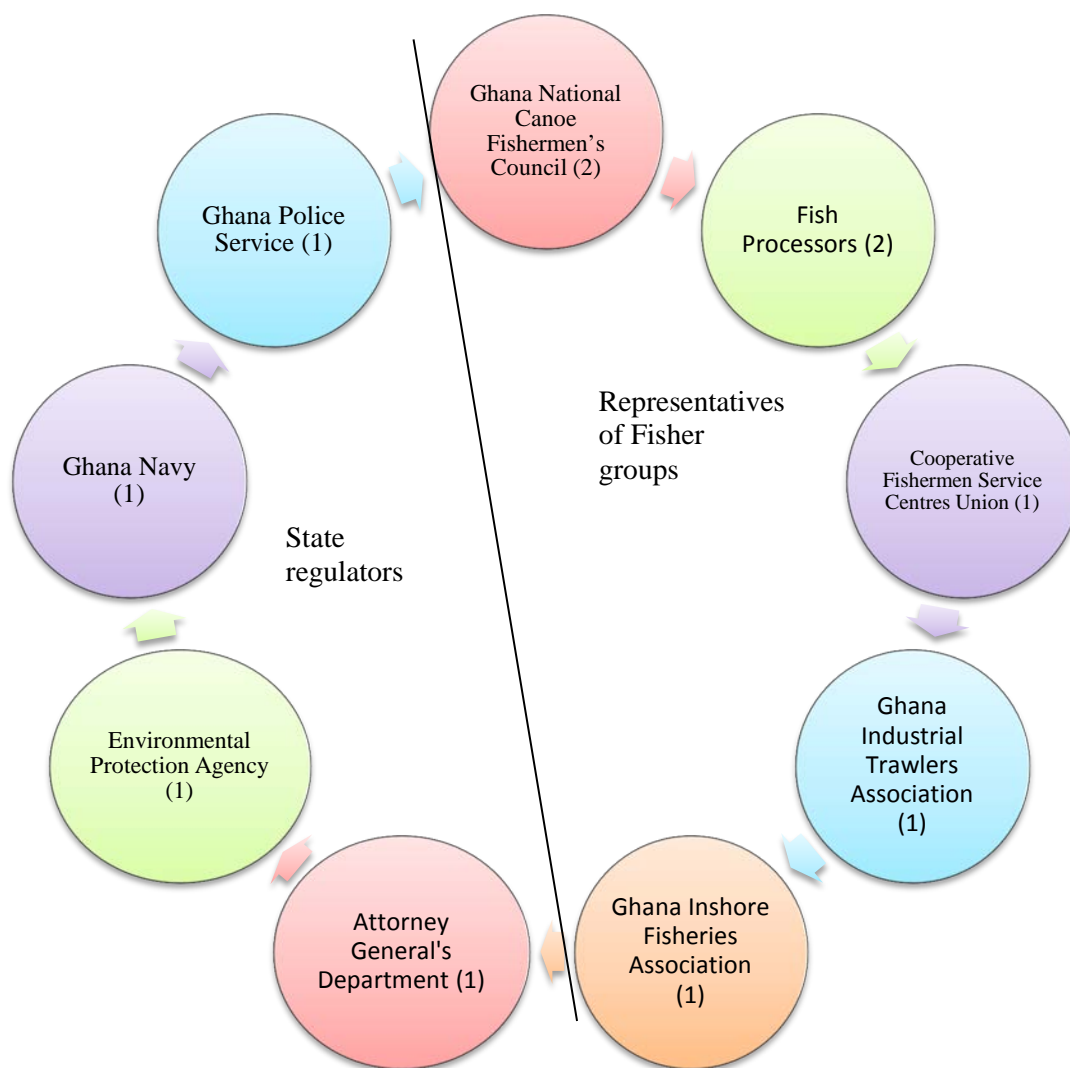


Figure 1 Initial membership composition of the Fisheries Working Group

These institutions were identified based on an appreciation of their roles in fisheries management and the advice they could offer the Fisheries Commission. Prior to the Group's maiden meeting, the Fisheries Commission was duly informed of the formation of the FWG and arrangements were underway at that time to have the Group inaugurated. Right from the first meeting, the need for a two-way information flow (i.e. from the various institutions to the FWG and vice versa) was stressed upon to ensure effectiveness and competence of the group.

The members were enthused and expressed their willingness to ensure a better delivery of whatever mandate that was bestowed on them. Because this meeting was a kind that introduced them to what necessitated the formation of the group, the members indicated that a positive feedback from the Fisheries Commission as to whether the commission was ready to collaborate and accept the mandate of the Group, would boost their commitment to remain keen members on the FWG. In their estimation, the participants believed that a positive feedback from the Fisheries Commission would contribute to sustainable fisheries management in the region. The participants also advised that there was the need for their various institutions to respond to the invitation and support their nomination as perpetual members of the FWG. Further to this, the facilitators recommended that to ensure consistency, institutions should dedicate and maintain files to document correspondences of

the FWG and which could inform especially, their replacements on issues. It was then explained that membership of the FWG will not be increased but rather when the need arises, new members could be co-opted.

After the endorsement of the group by the members, the facilitators presented a brief overview of the initiative. It was noted that the long term objective of the initiative was to support the government of Ghana in achieving its development objectives of poverty reduction, food security, sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation. The initiative at this point in time was in its second phase, so the facilitators outlined the components in the phase as:

1. Nested governance system
2. Improved governance of the landscape
3. Improved governance of the seascape
4. Capacity building
5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The mandate of the FWG was explained to be part of Component one. However, the group was expected to extend some support to implementing activities under Components two and three. Their mandates were spelt out in some Terms of Reference (ToR) which a five-member subcommittee was set up from within the members to review. The sub-committee members included:

- Mr. Kirk Mensah (Ghana Trawlers Association)
- Mr. Knox Tawiah (Cooperative Service Centres Union)
- Mr. Emmanuel Botchway (Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association)
- Mrs. Emelia Abakah Edu (GNCFC)
- Mr. Alex Sabah (Fisheries Commission)



Figure 2 Participants at the maiden meeting

To assist the sub-committee in reviewing their ToR, the members raised some concerns to be considered while executing their mandates. For instance, they mentioned the need to emphasize education of fisher-folks to ensure voluntary compliance of the fisheries regulations (LI 1968). They added that the education must include directions and guides at sea regarding exclusive zones, since fishermen could stray to such areas. Another major concern that was raised was the intrusion of Chinese Nationals into the fisheries industry particularly in boat construction (an activity reserved for Ghanaians).

To appreciate each institution's efforts and roles, and ensure collaborative work as a group, member institutions shared some challenges that needed consideration while working together as a group. These challenges are noted in Table 1.0. At the end of the meeting, the Director of the Western Regional Fisheries Commission expressed his joy for the group formation and assured the FWG of his outfit's support to the Group. Participants were then promised copies of the Fisheries Sector Review, Fisheries Policy - ACT 625 and L.I. 1968.

**ASSOCIATION/
INSTITUTION****CHALLENGES**

Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-gazetting of by-laws adds up to making enforcement of fisheries laws a difficult task.• The old strategies employed in combatting unsustainable fishing methods are not effective enough, hence the need to identify new strategies to halt the illegalities.• Issue of expensive and unavailability of fishing inputs do not receive much attention from relevant stakeholders.• Cases of abuse of fishermen by the Navy during arrests and other operations.
Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members do not receive any subsidy regarding Marine Gas Oil which is used by most of them.• The members suspect strongly that the provisions in the Fisheries L.I and its enforcement are solely targeted at them.
Ghana Industrial Trawlers Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Association has a problem with their vessels being classified as industrial whiles their sizes are less than that of the inshore vessels. The effect of this issue reflects in the amount they pay as license renewal fees.• Quarterly renewal of licenses instead of annual renewal
Ghana Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Navy is ill-equipped to undertake all its mandates efficiently.
Cooperative Fishermen Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The representative of the union admitted that Union members are guilty of using lights for fishing and suggested the provision of fish-finders as an alternative to its members.• Lack of cold storage facilities to store fish.• High cost of fishing inputs.
Fish Processors/Mongers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chemicals used for fishing affect the fish during processing and also the final product, therefore reducing the market value. It also poses some health hazards to the processors and consumers. They thus suggested the introduction of an appropriate technology to detect fish caught with chemicals.• Challenges with the use of obsolete methods of smoking fish. They therefore requested the introduction of a new technology for smoking fish.

Table 1 Institutional challenges of Fisheries Working Group members

On February 15, 2011, the second meeting of the FWG was organized. This meeting discussed issues around the ToR for the Group. It also discussed the Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 1968 Compliance Issues, and the Group's Action Planning. At the meeting, members of the group drew the attention of the Fisheries Commission to the fact that there has been intrusion by Chinese Nationals at the Sekondi fishing harbor. These Chinese nationals were

suspected of constructing *Genesis I & II* industrial vessels and trawling without licenses within the 30m zone which is allowable for per seine and Hook and Line. They then called for the Fisheries Commissions' immediate investigations into the matter and also investigations on these Chinese men to ascertain whether they fulfilled their immigration requirements (i.e. VISA applications, work permits, passport etc.). The Director of the Fisheries Commission indicated his interest in the matter and explained that he had already started an investigation into the issue. He added that his outfit is working in close contact with the Ghana Immigration Service to check on the work permits and other documents of these Chinese men, and that the findings would be shared with the FWG once investigations are concluded.

The Terms of Reference as discussed in the maiden meeting was expected to be reviewed by a five-member sub-committee of the Group. The sub-committee read out their revised version of the ToR and members made some additions and corrections, and accepted the outcome to be the workable ToR for the FWG. The agreed upon workable ToR include:

- Enhance communication between fisheries resource users and state regulators.
- Promote voluntary compliance and effective enforcement.
- Minimize conflict with oil and gas industry.

Regarding L.I. 1968 compliance issues, the FWG was particularly interested in advocating for voluntary compliance of the L.I. as a form of enforcement. However, their challenges had been with gazettement of bye-laws and investment in canoe frame survey. Representatives of the Sekondi Canoe Owners Association, who were introduced to the FWG meeting for the first time, presented their petition to the FWG for advice. They also requested for support to make their request made known to government. They raised the following issues on behalf of the fishermen in Sekondi:

- The LI.1968 (Fisheries Regulation 2010) must operate fairly through arrest of fishermen using any unapproved fishing methods. They noted that attention has been shifted to arresting only fishers using light fishing, and that this is not the only infringement on the L.I. The use of Carbide, DDT, Undersized nets, Poisonous Chemicals, Dynamites, as well as Fishing within restricted areas by trawlers, Dumping of Fish, Trans-shipment, among others are all part of the infringements. They hinted that the enforcement agencies, particularly the Ghana Navy have all their focus on light fishing, thinking it is the only infraction against the Fisheries Regulation.
- Most fishermen had invested heavily into multifilament and monofilaments nets and were using them along the coastal districts of the entire country even before the operationalization of the L.I.1968. They therefore requested that the FWG plead on the government to allow some time period for their usage. They explained that the nets would fade away gradually from the system all by itself.

Having raised the above issues, the representatives also proposed:

- A review of the LI.1968.
- A review of the open access regime, to discourage fishing throughout the year.
- Seizure of importation and manufacturing of monofilaments nets.
- Research into modern technologies in the fishing industry to enhance better fishing methods.

The representatives indicated that the Sekondi Fishermen (noted to be the naughtiest fishers when it comes to compliance with the law) would only comply with the L.I. only when they noticed that enforcement was fairly done across all sectors of the fisheries industry, and not targeted to only a few. To indicate fairness in the enforcement of the L.I., the following strategies were proposed by the FWG.

- There should be occasional visits by the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) unit of the Fisheries Commission and the Ghana Navy at fish landing beaches to arrest defaulters of the regulation including fishermen who use monofilaments and undersized nets.
- Adjudication of cases involving defaulters of the regulation should be fast-tracked to deter others from perpetrating similar offences.
- Chief Fishermen must be empowered and involved in the collaborative effort of the MCS and other security agencies to conduct inspection of canoes before and after any fishing expedition.

The group engaged in an action planning process and arrived at the following outcomes:

- The Fisheries Commission will disseminate the contents of the L.I. 1968 through various community engagements such as film shows, role plays, jingles, and radio programs at local radio stations and community information centers within the coastal districts.
- Press statement would be released by FWG as and when necessary.
- Members of the FWG will dedicate sometime of their busy schedules to join in information dissemination during education campaigns on the fisheries regulation at the various coastal communities.

On May 17 2011, the FWG had its third meeting to discuss structures of the Group and continue discussions on its action planning. In this meeting, a brief report was given with the issues of Chinese Intrusion into the local fisheries industry. It was noted by the Fisheries Commission upon their investigation that the Genesis I and II vessels had the requisite permits to trawl. The FWG then impressed on the FC to produce photocopies of the permits at the next meeting. Another point of note is that the Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA) admitted having erred in giving a permit for the construction of the fishing boats preceding permit by the Fisheries Commission. The FWG then planned on writing a letter to all concerned authorities, about the need to bring sanity in the licensing of vessels.



Figure 3 Director of the Hen Mpoano Initiative educating the Fisheries Working Group

2.1: Structures of the Fisheries Working Group

Regarding executive structures of the FWG, the members decided to create leadership portfolios to ensure a proper steering of affairs for the Group. Three positions were agreed upon. These positions are that of the President, Vice President and the Secretary. Some precautionary measures were put in place regarding who could be elected to occupy the positions. Members who represented government institutions were automatically disqualified from holding any executive position, considering the fact that they could be transferred from the region at any given time. As part of actions planned to be undertaken by the FWG, a press statement on compliance and enforcement of fisheries laws was scheduled to be released by the Fisheries Commission, to which the FWG pledged their backing and presence. The would-be executives were then mandated at this point in time to ensure the FWG's maximum participation. The members also agreed on fixing dates to carry out education drive exercise which would facilitation would be supported by the executives of the FWG. They were also to have discussions with the police to ascertain the security ramification of all available options for enforcement.

2.2 The FWG under a new Administration

The fourth meeting (on August 03, 2011) discussed issues relative to Co-management in the fisheries sector as well as Compliance and Enforcement of fisheries laws. This meeting was then headed by the new executive body, who continued from that time to steer the affairs of the Group. By way of co-management, the FWG planned to collaborate with the Marine Unit of the Ghana Police Service (MuGPS) popularly referred to as Marine Police. During this

time, formation of the MuGPS was still on the drawing board. Hence there wasn't much clarity as to what the mandate of the Marine Police would be. There were therefore fears of a potential duplication of activities between the Marine Police unit and the Fisheries/Marine Task Force². However, the police representative on the meeting promised to arrange a meeting between the officers in charge of setting up the unit and the ICFG Initiative to make inputs into the setting up of the unit.

In the past, a traditional way of fisheries management that went down well with fishermen in the Western Region was the swearing of oath. This was to ensure compliance and enforcement of fisheries laws to encourage fisheries management. With the oath swearing, fishers poured libation and invoked a curse on their own selves by professing the wrath of the sea god on themselves anytime they went fishing with any illegal method. However, swearing of oath was noted as not enshrined in law and did not have any legal backing to apprehend those who refused to abide by their profession during the oath taking. As a result, the members discussed and agreed that the only way out was to notify the police about the potential of illegal practices by those who refused to swear. This would cause the police to conduct random checks on their vessels even before they embarked on any fishing expedition; and thereby reducing the intensity of illegalities and contravention of the fisheries laws. To maximize the collaborative strength of the FWG with other agencies and increase their knowledge on relevant issues, the members were invited to join in a workshop organized on prosecution of fisheries cases. Ms. Pat Klinogo was however present in this meeting to brief the meeting of fisheries cases that the Attorney General's department had successfully and unsuccessfully dealt with as well as the ones that were pending. In her possession at the time of the meeting was a list of 12 cases, two of which had been prosecuted and four of which the people involved had pleaded guilty.

3.0 LESSONS FROM STUDY TOURS

Some members of the FWG were selected to partake in a study tour to Tanzania, Ivory Coast and Senegal. This study tour was organized by the ICFG Initiative. Participating members of FWG gave a debriefing of what they learned, as captured below:

Ivory Coast

- Registration was compulsory for all fishermen who wanted to fish; and at the port all of them were supposed to be registered before they could fish.
- Fish brought to the port are put on tarpaulins.
- Canoes that were not registered at the port did not get fuel supplies.
- There was high level of compliance to their regulations at the ports.
- Canoes were searched thoroughly for any illegal gears before and after fishing expeditions.
- In some parts of the country closed fishing seasons were practiced and adhered to by all fishers.
- Some of the measures were deterring enough to ensure voluntary compliance. For example, sinking of canoes that use unauthorized methods of fishing.
- There are many cooperatives (fishing groups) in the country mostly headed by Ghanaians who were put in charge of premix issues.
- Proceeds from premix were used to insure registered vessels.

² The Marine Task Force includes the Navy, the Police and the Fisheries Commission. Their role will include policing the sea as well as the shores

- It was also discovered that most of the country's Tuna were from Ghana.

Senegal

- Fishermen in Yof and Kayaa fishing communities in Senegal had been using dynamite and monofilament nets for fishing in the past but currently not practicing such methods of fishing, though they encountered a lot of resistance.
- They operate the quota system of fishing and also regulate fishing expeditions at the ports, i.e. if a large quantity of fish was landed in a day, all fishing expeditions were seized the next day.
- Senegal had also established Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- Premix fuel was sold by private individuals and institutions, with no subsidies at all. This made the fuel readily available for purchasing.
- There were several fishing groups in Senegal but their hierarchy and roles were complementary and clearly communicated to them. As a result, all of them worked closely with their fisheries department.
- There were a lot of refrigerated trucks at the port to cart fish to its destination.
- Women in Senegal travelled and researched into how countries they export their fish prefer their fish to be processed. This helped them to always get a ready market for their products.
- In Senegal, there were quality control labs at the port to check the state of the landed fish.
- They also had hotlines with which people could report suspected fishermen who used unauthorized methods of fishing.
- Another observation by the study tour participants was that there were speed boats which patrolled the sea to ensure bigger vessels did not fish close to the shore.
- The country had also instituted law courts which dealt with fisheries offenses.
- The youth were in seen to be at the forefront of fisheries management and were being supported by the elderly.
- They had also instituted closed seasons for fishing.

Tanzania

- In addition to most of the above mentioned, the Tanzania participants learned how Marine Protected Areas have been established in the country.

4.0 UPDATE ON PROSECUTION OF FISHERIES CASES

As part of the Agenda for the fifth FWG meeting on September 07, 2011, Ms. Klinogo outlined cases that had been dealt, as well as those that were in court and those yet to be brought before court since January 2011. The cases are classified as follows:

State of cases

- 31 vessels have been arrested for various offenses
 - 16 of these vessels have been arraigned before court
 - The remaining 15 cases will be brought before court after the ongoing cases are completed.

Offenses

- Out of the 31 vessels arrested, 20 were charge for using light for fishing.
- 6 were charge for fishing without license.
- 3 for fishing without license and using undersized nets.
- 2 for fishing in prohibited zones.
- 5 of the cases have been successfully judged and offenders convicted with some convicted for more than one offence.
- Bulbs and generators have been seized from offenders convicted of using light for fishing.
- Some were charged on several counts. For instance, with one case referred to as the Nana Anoa case the officials on board the vessel were charge on three counts i.e. fishing without a license, the engineer operating without a license and using undersized nets for fishing. The engineer and the captain were acquitted on the charges of fishing without license and operating without a license. They however pleaded guilty on the charge of using undersized nets for fishing and were convicted as such. They were charge to pay 200 penalty units.
- More than 80% of the cases brought before the courts relate to light fishing.

It was agreed that FWG finds a way to get the already prosecuted cases published in the media.

The sixth meeting on November 08 2011 sought to Interact with the Jubilee Partners on regarding Fisheries and Oil activities and conflicts. Though an invitation was sent to them early enough, the Jubilee Partners could not turn up for the discussions, neither did they communicate their absence to the organizers of the meeting. This left the FWG disappointed at their actions. They however went ahead to discuss the strategies employed to ensure compliance and enforcement of the fisheries laws. It was noted that the way and manner in which the Fisheries Task Force were conducting enforcement at the moment was causing a lot of mayhem. There was therefore the need for more sensitization and education prior to the enforcement. The FWG as a legitimate body was then tasked to state its position on the activities of the task force.

5.0 LEANING BACK

On January 23, 2012, the FWG sat back and discussed 2011 in retrospect. It was noted that in the year 2011, the Group's activities had been largely concentrated on promoting voluntary compliance and enforcement of the Fisheries laws in the Western Region. Additionally, issues of co-management at the beach level were dealt with and attempts were made to help fisheries gain recognition at the District Assemblies. *A key success that was achieved at this particular moment was the improvement in relationships among member institutions of the FWG.* There were however some challenges raised by the members. A major one that was discussed was Government's support which had not been enough to support the campaign for compliance of the fisheries L.I.

Some key lessons learnt included the fact that enforcement was good as long as it was coupled with education. There was therefore the need for Fisheries Commission to carry out more education so that the fishers would see the Commission as a protector of the resource, and not an enemy. Another lesson was that the fishermen were eager to support enforcement after they were educated on the need for managing the fisheries resources. They had therefore

requested that the institution of the Marine Unit of the Ghana Police Service be expedited. They also advised that inspections of vessels be carried out before and after fishing expeditions at the various fish landing sites.

Regarding District and Community level engagements, it was noted that efforts had been made to get fisheries issues discussed at the district assembly level in the course of 2011. It was realized from these engagements with the District Assemblies that officials of the Assemblies were largely ignorant of happenings in the fisheries sector. Some issues that came up from the engagement were that Canoe registration to be undertaken by the coastal District Assemblies. There was also the need to empower chief fishermen in the communities to make their role significant in these changing times. The FWG members expressed much appreciation to the ICFG Initiative and its funder USAID for the support; and encouraged the Initiative to continue its dialogues with the District Assemblies, as they still do not have a full grasp of the issues in the fisheries sector.



Figure 4 FWG members sharing lessons learnt in one of their meeting

6.0 MOVING ON TO THE NEXT LEVEL

As part of efforts to move the activities of the FWG to the next level, information were gathered from members as to the kind of linkages and relationships the various institutions and agencies they represented have been able to forge with others in the Group since its formation. The following were noted:

- Increased knowledge of the fact that the collaborators were one people working together for the betterment of the Fisheries Sector and the Nation as a whole.

- Fish processors have been understood better by the fishers to be an important part of the fisheries chain, and that without them the fishermen could not operate successfully.
- The trawlers are co-operating more than they were before.
- Fishers have come to the realization that the Navy and other enforcement agencies are not enemies.
- Improved working relationship with all the institutions.
- Grievances of all institutions have been brought to book for better redress.
- Improved knowledge on the Fisheries laws with the education by the Hen Mpoano Initiative and technical explanation by the Attorney General's department.
- Improved communication skills of representatives from the various institutions so long as fisheries issues are concerned.
- Enhanced and broadened fisheries knowledge transfer via participation in the study tours.
- Improved Compliance of the fisheries law by some fisher-groups like GIFA and GNCFC. This is because their leaders have been educating their groups on the information they gathered during FWG meetings.
- There had been joint plans and execution of operations through joint patrols on the sea and ports, by some FWG institutions.
- Reduced bureaucratic processes and as a result enhanced effective communication between resource users and state regulators.

With these lessons in mind, the Group planned to undertake beach-to-beach visitations to sensitize and educate fishermen on the fisheries L.I. the implementing partners of the Hen Mpoano Initiative were then task to facilitate dates and assist the FWG financially in conducting this exercise. In order to educate the fishermen and have answers to possible questions from them during the sensitization, the Group requested that the Ghana Maritime Authority be invited to their next meeting to elaborate to the Group their mandate relative to the livelihood of the fishers, and to clarify relevant issues for the members to become abreast with information to become efficient in their education rounds.

The group also planned to table some concerns at a National Fisheries Dialogue which was scheduled to be organized by the Hen Mpoano Initiative. They then met to discuss topics and issues with support from an expert with the World Fish Center who helped to fine-tune the issues. According to Godfred Ameyaw Asiedu (the expert), the dialogue wasn't meant to have conclusions but to share on the need to have a new management system in the fisheries sector. It therefore began with touring some fishing communities in the Western Region to get participants acquainted with issues in the communities. This was then followed by the dialogue workshop in Elmina which was attended by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, the Chairman and Director of the Fisheries Commission and other relevant stakeholders. He indicated that participants at the dialogue, including members of the FWG generally agreed on the need to decentralize governance in the fisheries sector, to have the current top down approach to governance changed and have a feedback mechanism established. With the feedback mechanism, there is information flow from the bottom-up as well as the top-down.

The Hen Mpoano Initiative, as part of its activities, worked on several Policy Discussion Papers which the FWG usually deliberated on and drew insight from, for information and educational purposes. Some of the policy briefs included:

- A Nested Coastal and Marine Governance System.
- Managing our Coastal Wetlands: Lesson from the Western Region.

- Integrating Voluntary Compliance with the Effective Enforcement of Fishery Regulation.
- A national Framework for Fisheries Co-management in Ghana.
- Freshwater supply and Distribution: A developing Crisis in the Western Region.

These policy briefs had inculcated a lot of the concerns raised by the FWG as part of its activities since its inception. For instance, prior to the publishing of the policy discussion paper on *Integrating Voluntary Compliance with Effective Enforcement of Fishery Regulation*, the group made some inputs. They endorsed the inclusion of Fisheries Commission officials on board naval ships during sea patrols. The Group suggested the possible invitation of the Rector of the Takoradi Polytechnic to one of its meetings. They intended having discussions with him to propose the establishment of a department in the Polytechnic to be in charge of fisheries and coastal management with possible assistance of the oil companies.

On Friday June 22, 2012, fire gutted a filling station where fishermen were buying pre-mix fuel at Axim in the Nzema East Municipality. The FWG as part of its 11th meeting agenda discussed this Axim fire incidence with the aim to prescribe suggestions that could forestall such fire outbreak from happening again. Though they enumerated some challenges, their main focus was on proposing safety measures. One major challenge was the improper co-management system in premix distribution at the beach level. They noted that most of the chief fishermen have been marginalized in premix distribution based on the partisan polarization.

With safety issues, the EPA alerted everyone that most of the infrastructure base for premix distribution was poor, whereas most of the firefighting equipment was also not in good shape. In addition, there had been inadequate requisite human resources to handle premix at the distribution centers. Coupled with this had also been overcrowding of premix distribution sites by fishers and in some cases, non-fishers alike. The FWG therefore proposed the following safety measures:

- There should be proper distribution of the pre-mix fuel via the use of tubes, with well-arranged drums at the distribution sites. A notable scene at most premix distribution sites was always a case of distributors scooping the fuel and pouring into the drums of those who purchased.
- Distribution of premix should be devoid of nepotism and must be served on first come first serve bases, with cards issued out to prospective buyers in the case of late delivery.
- There should be inventory of premix distribution sites along the coast line.
- Technical hands must be employed to handle premix.

The FWG then proposed a press conference to bring this issue to the notice of the government and the public so that it could be properly addressed appropriately.

Moving on, the FWG through its capacity enhancement that was facilitated by the ICFG Initiative became more resourceful to the management of the fisheries resources in the Western Region. A more successful story was noted when the newly Marine Unit of the Ghana Police Service were being trained; where four members of the FWG served as resource persons and delivered presentation from various dimensions of the fisheries industry. Addition to this, the group continued its discussions on strategies towards voluntary compliance as well as strengthening marine and coastal governance at the district and regional level.

A round-table meeting on voluntary compliance was then organized by the FWG on May 28, 2013 on the theme “*Addressing Challenges of Compliance and Enforcement of the Fisheries Regulation*”. At the end of the meeting, a communiqué³ was issued by the 47 stakeholders who attended the meeting. Prior to this round-table meeting, the MuGPS had already visited the coastal communities with some members of the FWG to sensitize them on their mandates. To strengthen regional and district level governance, a courtesy call was paid to the Regional minister’s office to introduce the MuGPS and the FWG

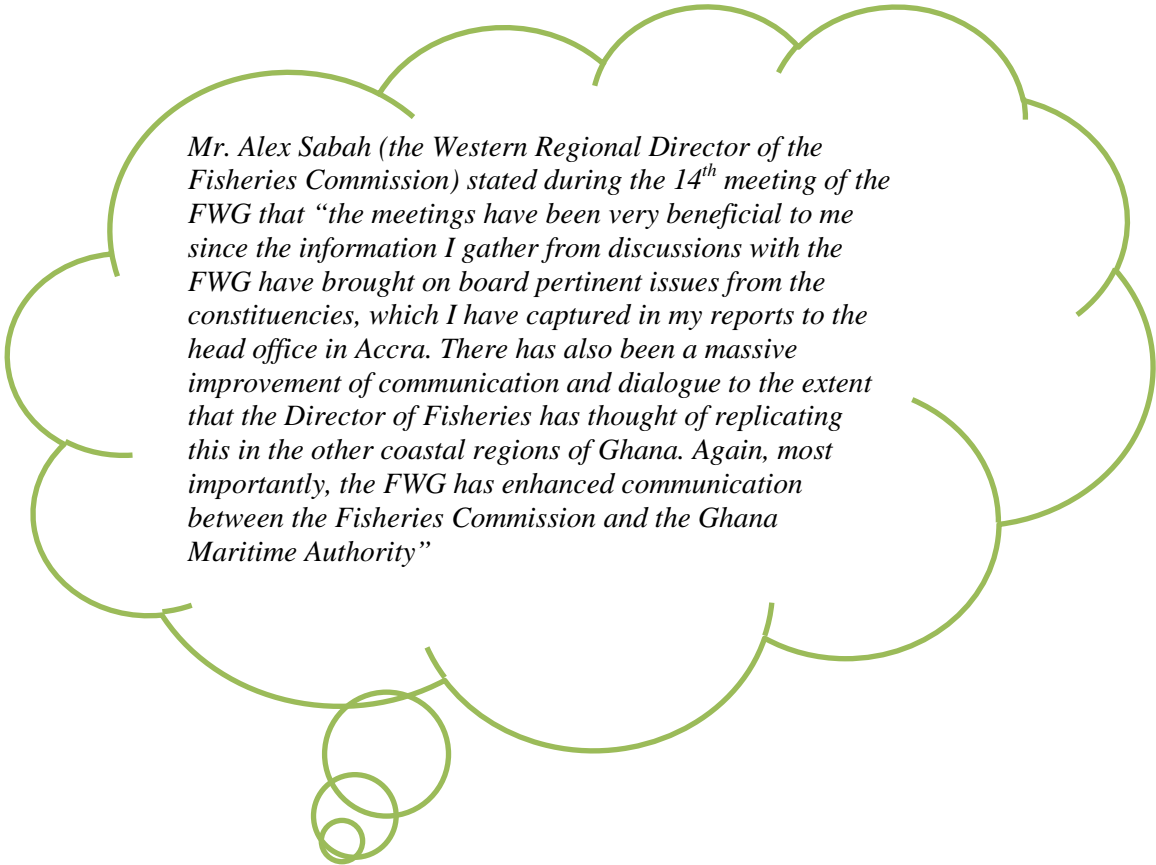


Figure 5 A cross-section of participants during the round-table meeting on voluntary compliance

A crucial milestone achievement of the FWG has been the impact it has made so far on the Fisheries Commission.

Mr. Alex Sabah indicated that the Commission has requested the FWG to assist them in making decisions in terms of license issuing as well as helping in arbitration of fisheries issues. In addition to this, he requested that the FWG could also assist in nominating fishermen for the Best Fisherman award during National Farmers’ Day celebration, which has a category for fishermen.

³ Content of Communiqué is attached as Appendix 1



Mr. Alex Sabah (the Western Regional Director of the Fisheries Commission) stated during the 14th meeting of the FWG that “the meetings have been very beneficial to me since the information I gather from discussions with the FWG have brought on board pertinent issues from the constituencies, which I have captured in my reports to the head office in Accra. There has also been a massive improvement of communication and dialogue to the extent that the Director of Fisheries has thought of replicating this in the other coastal regions of Ghana. Again, most importantly, the FWG has enhanced communication between the Fisheries Commission and the Ghana Maritime Authority”

7.0: SUSTAINING FWG BEYOND THE HEN MPOANO’S PROJECT LIFE SPAN

The FWG has over the years proven to be an important body which could bridge the gap between state regulators and resource users in the fisheries industry. Its formation, capacity enhancement and advocacy activities have all been facilitated by the Hen Mpoano Initiative. Unfortunately, every project has a life cycle, and the four-year life span of the Hen Mpoano Initiative ends September 2013. A major concern that came up from all angles was how sustainable the FWG could be. All concerned stakeholders expressed worry about the fact that the group may collapse after the end of the project; and thereby advocated for strategies to sustain the group beyond the project life span. Having the privilege of the presence of Mrs. Matilda Quist (the Director of Marine Fisheries from the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development), and after listening carefully to submissions of the Group’s terms of reference, activities and successes of the FWG, she requested that a note of all that was needed to sustain the group be drafted by the Fisheries Commission and sent to her. She mentioned various roles slated for the Ghana Navy, Police and Air force in the WARFP (fisheries project) funded by the World Bank and appreciated that Western region had already engaged very well with them.

The Western Regional Fisheries Commission pledged its support to the FWG should there be enough funds from their coffers. All things being equal, the Commission would host meetings of the FWG. The group also discussed how to rotate hosting of meetings as a shared responsibility of the participating institutions, with the exception of the regulatory agencies, until a permanent funding source is identified and obtained by the FWG.

APPENDIX 1

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.
3. A team be composed to dialogue with the Fisheries Commission and the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture 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 (Nkonkonhemaa) Association
- Ghana Inshore Fisheries Association – W/R
- Ghana Trawlers Association – W/R
- All Participants

The Fisheries Working Group, comprised of Fisher groups and representatives of state regulatory agencies like Ghana Navy, Ghana Air Force, Marine Unit of the Ghana Police Service, Environmental Protection Agency and the Attorney General's Department 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)