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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Editors/Morning Show Hosts Luncheon Media Outreach Event



JUNE, 2018

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF OCEANOGRAPHY



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Citation: Coastal Resources Center. (2018). Editors/Morning Show Hosts Luncheon Media Outreach Event. The USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP). Narragansett, RI: Coastal Resources Center, Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island. GH2014_COM093_CRC. 9 pp.

Authority/Disclaimer:

Prepared for USAID/Ghana under Cooperative Agreement (AID-641-A-15-00001), awarded on October 22, 2014 to the University of Rhode Island, and entitled the USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP).

This document is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The views expressed and opinions contained in this report are those of the SFMP team and are not intended as statements of policy of either USAID or the cooperating organizations. As such, the contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the SFMP team and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Cover photo: Participants at media outreach event. Credit: Coastal Resources Center

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SNV: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/ghana>

ACRONYMS

CBFMC	Community Based Fisheries Management Committee
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
DAA	Development Action Association
DOPA	Densu Oyster Pickers Association
DDT	Dichlorodiphenyl trichloroethane
DoF	Department of Fisheries
FoN	Friends of the Nation
GIFA	Ghana Industrial Fishers Association
GITA	Ghana Inshore Fishers
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
GoG	Government of Ghana
LI	Legislative Instrument
MMA	Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOFAD	Ministry of Food and Aquaculture Development
MoFi	Ministry of Food and Industry
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NAFPTA	National Association of Fish Processors and Traders
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SSG	SSG Advisors
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB/FSSCBP	World Bank/ Fisheries Sub-Sector Capacity Building Project

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INTRODUCTION

USAID has committed approximately \$24 million US Dollars to the implementation of the 5 year USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) from October 2014 to October 2019). This Project is to rebuild marine fisheries stocks and catches through the adoption of responsible fishing practices. The project contributes to the Government of Ghana's fisheries development objectives and USAID's Feed the Future Initiative.

As part of the communication strategy, SFMP organized the Editors/morning show hosts luncheon to create the enabling environment for the senior Journalists and players in the fisheries sector to interact and share knowledge on the fisheries sector and also help the senior Journalists understand and appreciate the deeper issues facing Ghana to be able to effectively generate quality reports on them. It was also to appeal to the editors/morning show hosts to prioritize reportage and discussions in the fisheries sector. This is to help put issues in the fisheries sector in the spotlight to generate discussions in the media landscape.

This event brought together over 30 senior journalists and morning show hosts to enable them to understand and appreciate fisheries development issues and be able to lead discussions on them and assign reporters to cover fisheries-related events in order to churn out quality news reports. It also afforded MOFAD/FC who were represented by the Deputy Minister, Hon. Francis Ato Cudjoe and the Chief Director, Prof. F.K Nunoo respectively to have direct engagement with the media on fisheries development issues facing Ghana. These senior Journalists also shared their thoughts on effective ways to foster stronger media relations and also to have a first-hand understanding of the realities of the status on Ghana fisheries stocks and why the implementation of a closed season in the fisheries sector this year was crucial.

SFMP was represented by Mr. Maurice Knight, Kofi Agbogah, Nii Odenke Abbey, Fanny Nana Ampon, Abdul-Mumin Ahmed and Socrates Apetorgbor; while MoFAD/FC was represented by its Public Relations Officer, Karimatu Anas and Cynthia Fiator. Doris Owusu, market development specialist from Resonance Global also participated and gave a brief presentation on the benefits of using the Ahotor oven.

1.1 Objectives of the workshop

- To connect with news/decision makers in the media
- To set the tone for media discussions on fisheries closed season
- To bridge gap between media and fisheries stakeholders
- Deepen ties with media for improved food security

1.2 Some expectations from Participants

- Deeper understanding of fisheries issues
- Understand the status of dwindling fish stocks and why a closed season must be observed to salvage the situation.
- Understand and find ways to sustain the fisheries sector
- To set the agenda on fisheries issue in the media landscape and to draw the attention of policy makers
- Have renewed strength to report on fisheries issues to help influence policy in the fisheries sector
- Learn more to inform future reportage and discussions

2. PRESENTATION ON THE SFMP

Mr Maurice Knight, COP of SFMP welcomed the participants and gave an overview of US government's support for the fisheries sector in Ghana.

2.1 Welcome address

The Chief of party of SFMP Mr. Maurice Knight welcomed participants to the Editors/morning show hosts luncheon and told them how delighted he was to meet the news makers and agenda setters. He indicated that the depletion of fish stocks in Ghana's marine waters would put food security and poverty reduction goals at risk. Referring to a baseline study by SFMP, Mr. Knight also urged the government of Ghana to increase efforts at implementing the national fisheries management plan to reverse this trend and also pledged SFMP's support to MoFAD/FC in their efforts to help rebuild fish stocks. He also assured the media to work closely together to achieve set goals for the fisheries sector.

2.2 US government's support to Ghana

Mr. Knight said the US government was committed to helping Ghana rebuild its fish stocks and catches through the adoption of responsible fishing practices. He explained the project contributes to the Government of Ghana's fisheries development objectives and USAID's feed the Future Initiative. While commending the government of Ghana for the solid cordial relationship with the US, Mr. Maurice Knight reiterated SFMP's commitment to supporting MoFAD/FC to implement recommendations in the national fisheries management plan to improve the livelihoods of fishing communities and also improve food security.

2.3 Viewing of Five Minutes Video on Visit to The Gambia

Participants at the event had the opportunity to view a five-minute video of a trip by members of the Densu Oyster Pickers Association to the Gambia to visit members of the TRY Oyster Women's association, a trade organization in the Gambia. The trip created the opportunity for continued learning, mutual support and joint initiatives oyster management to help sustain oyster fisheries in their respective countries. The video was shown as a means of introducing the senior Journalist to some of the activities of the local implementing partners of SFMP, DAA in this case; all in a bid to generate publicity support for SFMP local implementing partners.

2.4. Presentation on Status of the Stocks/Closed Season

Mr Kofi Agbogah, the Senior Advisor of SFMP gave a detailed presentation on the status of Ghana's fisheries stocks and its implications. In a power point presentation. He described the status of Ghana's fisheries stocks as a crisis situation that needed drastic measures to address. He attributed the situation to the weak enforcement of fisheries regulations as well as a dysfunctional fisheries governance system. He gave the refusal of canoe owners to register their canoes as a perfect example, although it is clearly stated in the fisheries act. Mr. Agbogah ended his submission by emphasizing that a closed season in the fisheries sector was a key tool in reversing the situation and urged the government to learn from best practices from countries such as the Philippines and Norway. He also urged the media to join in the efforts to educate and inform the Ghanaian public on the status of the stocks and the benefits of a fisheries closed season.

3. UPDATE ON AHOTOR OVEN AND NATIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

The market development specialist from Resonance Global, Ms Doris Owusu in a brief presentation on the Ahotor oven said improving the quality and adding value to smoked fish is a significant step towards economic progress, sustainable and improved livelihood enhancement, and ensuring the health and safety of people who depend on fish smoking as an occupation. She added that unfortunately, many fish processors in Ghana currently do not use hygienic methods or improved fish processing technology to process their fish. This makes it difficult for most processors to expand their businesses and help boost the local economy. She therefore appealed to the media to join the advocacy for appealing to fish processors to adopt the use of the Ahotor oven as it offers more market opportunities, with less fuelwood, less smoke, less health risk and produces quality smoked fish.

The Deputy Minister for MoFAD, Mr. Kingsley Ato Cudjoe disclosed that a new fisheries management plan will be developed as the current one will end in 2019. Mr. Ato Cudjoe mentioned the establishment of marine protection zones and a task force to inspect vessels as part of a larger effort to help replenish the country's fisheries resources. He also disclosed that the government would in August announce a closed season in the fisheries sector which is at the fore front of measures to rebuild stocks. He asked the media to support this effort.

4. QUESTIONS/ANSWERS ON THE PRESENTATIONS

Questions and Answers

After the presentations, the Journalists asked a number of questions which included:

- How fisherfolk will fend for themselves during the implementation of the fisheries closed season?
- What MoFAD/FC is doing to combat IUU fishing?

The resource persons, comprising the SFMP COP Mr. Maurice Knight, Mr. Kofi Agbogah, SFMP Fisheries Advisor and the Deputy Minister for MoFAD and the chief director took turns to answer questions posed by the senior Journalists. At the end of the day, the Journalists and pledged to work closely with SFMP, MoFAD/FC together to ensure sustainable fishing in Ghana.

Discussion on how to deepen relationship with the media

The discussion on ensuring effective collaboration with the media was led by Mrs Fanny Nana Ampon of SFMP. In her presentation she expressed SFMP's appreciation to the senior editors and program presenters for their support since the beginning of the project. She further reiterated that for Ghana's fishery sector to be effective, the media needs to educate citizens on their roles and responsibilities in the sector. She further asked for their continuous support to get fisheries issues onto the national agenda. The senior Journalists further reiterated the suggestion earlier made by Journalists to SFMP for support in the form of facilitating fisheries reportage in the four coastal regions by providing them with transportation, accommodation and resource persons to cover fisheries stories. They however expressed their frustration with the unwillingness of MoFAD/FC officials to grant them interviews which hampers effective and balanced reportage. They therefore proposed to them to be more open and available to grant interviews and serve as resource persons on their programs.