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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Lessons Learned Report On IUU Video Screening



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THE
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Cover photo: Picture collage of IUU video screening events (Credit: Hen Mpoano)

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ACRONYMS

CCM	Centre for Coastal Management
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CRC	Coastal Resource Center
CSLP	Coastal Sustainable Landscape Project
DAA	Development Action Association
DFAS	Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Science
DMFS	Department of Marine Fisheries Sciences
DQF	Daasgift Quality Foundation
FtF	Feed the Future
GIFA	Ghana Inshore Fishermen's Association
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council
HM	Hen Mpoano
ICFG	Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance
MESTI	Ministry of Environment Science and Technology
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SSG	SSG Advisors
STWG	Scientific and Technical Working Group
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARFP	West Africa Regional Fisheries Development Program

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The USAID-funded Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (USAID/SFMP) implemented by the University of Rhode Island is working through local and international partners to rebuild marine fisheries stocks and catches through adoption of responsible fishing practices. This work goes to support the work of Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) and the Fisheries Commission (FC). It aims to rebuild fish stocks to enhance the socio-economic conditions of fishing communities, create employment, and improve food security.

To contribute to efforts by the SFMP, Hen Mpoano and FoN in collaboration with Fisheries Commission and the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture and Development, organized an intensive community outreach programmes in the Western and Central Regions of Ghana. In all, ten communities of each region were reached out. The communities visited in the Western Region were Axim, Dixcove, Memia, Bako, Half Assini, Ahobre, Ngyiresia, Abuesi, Shama and Sekondi, and that of the Central Region were Elmina, Komenda, Cape Coast, Moore, Biriwa, Abandze, Otuam, Narkwa, Winneba and Mumford.

Videos produced in the Fante language on Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing were screened in nine communities out of the selected fifteen communities planned. These communities include, Half Assini in Western Region and Komenda, Cape Coast, Moore, Biriwa, Ekumpoano, Otuam, Narkwa and Winneba. Hundreds of community members came out to witness these events. The Fisheries Commission and the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development supported the activities with their multipurpose Audio-Visual Van in screening the IUU videos and making community entry announcements. Friends of the Nation used community dramas to educate fishers and community members on good fishing practices, and explain sections of the draft fisheries management plan.

Hen Mpoano subsequently visited the two communities (Adina and Abutiakpope) in the Volta region and James Town in the Greater Accra Region to screen the IUU video that has been reproduce in the Ewe and Ga languages respectively.

1.1 Objectives of this joint community outreach program

The objectives of the joint community outreach program were to:

- Educate community members on the effects of IUU fishing on the fisheries sector
- Get inputs and feedback from communities on issues of fisheries
- Coordinate inputs of SFMP IPs to reduce community fatigue

SECTION 2: QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS AND SUGGESTION

Below are regional base outputs from the discussions after the IUU video screening in selected fishing communities along the four coastal regions of Ghana. These are from various sectors of the fishing industry. People involved in both the video screening and afterwards discussions included fishermen, fish mongers and processors, chief fishermen and their council, and community members.

SECTION 2: WESTERN REGION

Fishers were open to interventions that has worked for other jurisdictions to be implemented in their area. They argued that, the lack of political will on the part of government to enforce the fisheries laws and fight against IUU fishing has contributed to an increase in various act of illegal fishing practices among the fishing communities. Fishmongers and processors urged government to actively involve itself in the campaign against IUU fishing. The ban on importation of nets with small mesh by government was also the plea of the fishers. Enforcement of the fisheries law should be the priority of the government and the Fisheries Ministry. They pledged their support to the fisheries ministry and commission if they start walking their talk. The urged the fisheries ministry to strengthen and deploy the Marine Police to enforce the fisheries laws since this was the reason for their establishment and in cooperation.



Figure 1: Picture collage of IUU video screening in the Western region

2.1 Central Region

Fishing communities were worried about the declining fish catches and urged government to work closely with all relevant stakeholders to revamp Ghana's fishing industry.

Fishmongers and processors encouraged their fellow women who are into fish processing and sales, to desist from buying fish that were caught with explosives and chemicals such as dynamite, carbide and fishing with light. Sensitization and educational campaigns on good fishing practices should be intensified and sustained to realize their desired outcomes.

Fishers pledged their support to the fisheries ministry and commission, should they introduce close seasons. This they said have worked in other jurisdiction where the sea is closed for a period for stocks to rebuild. Fishers encouraged themselves to respect and abide by the fisheries laws to sanitize the fisheries sector from the menace within the sector, which is evidence of low fish catch and increasing food insecurity in fishing communities. Local fishermen should be engaged in the enforcement process through observations, recordings and reporting of offenders to appropriate agencies. The government should work with Chief fishermen to stop the menace of IUU by empowering them to work at their landing beaches.



Figure 2: Picture collage of IUU video screening in the Central Region

2.2 Volta Region

Members of these communities blamed continued Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (I.U.U.) fishing activities on lack of political will, lack of proper law enforcement and the continued use of chemicals and explosives by local fishermen. They added that cooperation between fisher folk, the government, law enforcement agencies and other non-governmental organizations is needed to stop the practices.

It was agreed that everyone including fishermen, fish processors, fish traders and consumers alike had a role to play in curbing IUU fishing practices in Ghana's coastal waters. A fisherman advised his fellow fishers to put a stop to IUU fishing practices since the practice had many negative effects on the fish stock, fish quality, health of the sea and the livelihoods associated with the fishing industry.

Fishers from Adina and Abutiakpope volunteered to be ambassadors of change to educate and sensitize other fishers to voluntarily comply with fisheries law and support in the fight against IUU fishing.



Figure 3: Picture collage of IUU video screening in the Volta Region

2.3 Greater Accra Region

Fishers alluded to the fact that, before an unapproved net/ Fishing Aggregation Devices gets to the country, they pass through the borders, hence government should make an effort to seize and destroy these nets including Fishing Aggregation Devices (FADs). They explained that fishermen will not use these unapproved nets and devices if they do not get access to them. The Chief fisherman asked the fishers to actively participate in efforts to regulate and enforce regulations to stop Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (I.U.U.) fishing to boost

yields from the fishing industry in Ghana and ensure resources are maintained for the benefit of future generations. Video clips of the engagements with the James Town were shown on Ghana Television during a morning show which sought to sensitize and educate fishers and the general public on the effects and impacts of IUU fishing on Ghana's fisheries resources.



Figure 4: Picture collage of IUU video screening in the Greater Accra Region

2.4 Impacts of IUU fishing

In Ghana, the impacts of IUU fishing can be felt financially, economically, socially and environmentally/ecologically. In this report, emphasis is on the social and environmental/ecological impacts. This is so because discussions on the video by fishers delved into the effect of IUU on the marine environment to specifically reduced productivity of fish stocks and the rippling effect on their communities and households.

IUU fishing usually contributes to unsustainable impacts on both target species and the ecosystem. This has negative effect on the recruitment rate of fish stocks. It also has repercussions on food insecurity for families and households of artisanal fishers. The effect is very prominent in communities whose economy is heavily dependent on fish as a source of animal protein and the sole source of income generating activities and as a livelihood.

Conflict between fishers who indulge in IUU and other fishery users do occur in Ghana. An example is that between industrial and artisanal fishermen, where industrial fleets fish within the IEZ, close to shore. Local fishermen have sighted and reported industrial licensed fishing vessels often encroaching inshore exclusive zones for artisanal fishers and using illegal fishing gear, equipment and methods.

Conflict between artisanal and big oil vessels do occur in the Western Region due to offshore oil and gas industry where oil vessel collides with artisanal fishing canoes, destroying nets and canoes leading to several injuries of fishers and sometimes death.

SECTION 3: LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATION

This section summarizes the lessons learned from the IUU video screening in selected coastal communities and suggest recommendations to solving and mitigating the problems caused by IUU fishing in these fishing communities.

- IUU fishing has had and is having negative economic and downstream social impacts on indigenous fishing families and households and if unchecked may lead to other maritime security issues.
- Fishers face the reality of the declined Ghanaian fisheries sector.
- Fishers are ready for a change should it happen from the east to the west coast.
- Government interventions that do not take into account fishers views and opinions are never successful.
- Fishers agree to existing problem and are ready to work together and stop the blame game syndrome.
- Women will play a key role in the fight against IUU fishing and must be engaged.
- There is the need to intensify sensitization and educational campaigns to enhance behavioral change, which will then foster voluntary compliance of the fisheries law.
- Involvement of fishers in enforcement of the fisheries laws should be encouraged; hence, the establishment of the Fisheries Watch Volunteers who are well trained and motivated is a laudable initiative. Even though not directly involved in enforcement, their observations and recording can provide useful information for the guiding and improving the surveillance system by identifying illegal offenders for actions to be taken against them.
- Continuous government support, effective institutions and linkages as well as political will to curb IUU are needed.
- Fight against IUU Fishing should be part of the political agenda and government interventions programs.
- Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) division should be well capacitated to undertake regular offshore patrol. This is by strengthening the MCS and beefing it up with a good and reliable governance system.
- Information sharing and building of linkages between relevant state institutions and among all stakeholders. This implies putting in place good mechanisms for information sharing.
- Even though fish catch is declining, hungry fishermen will not stop catching and eating fish since there are little or no alternatives.
- Chief fishermen should be recognized by MOFAD/FC and empowered to enable them enforce the fisheries laws at the landing beaches.