

FAO VG-SSF REPORT

Activities on the Implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries in Ghana

Ewe Local Workshop

16 December 2018, Keta Volta Region



TECHNICAL SERVICES
FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



One- Day Workshop for Fishworkers and Fishworker Organisations Keta, Volta Region

16 December 2018, Keta Municipal Assembly



Background

Located 160 km east of Accra is Keta, the administrative capital of Keta Municipal in the Volta Region. The Keta Municipal is endowed with considerable water bodies; 60 km of the Atlantic coastline and the 300 km² Keta Lagoon, the largest lagoon in Ghana. In addition, there are numerous rivers and creeks that support small-scale fisheries economy. In recent years, the once thriving fishery sector noted for its anchovies, mullets, shrimps, sea breams and oysters is on the decline.

According to the SSF actors, the decline in landings is attributable to overfishing by migrant fishers, use of destructive fishing gears and unsustainable fishing methods employing the use of light, chemicals and explosives. The downturn in the fishery fortunes has adversely affected livelihoods and ancillary businesses. Another looming threat is the possible oil/gas production in the Keta Basin. In 2016, Swiss African Oil Company was granted license by the Parliament of Ghana to explore hydrocarbons in the Keta Basin. A coalition of fishworkers and farmers estimate that some 600,000 inhabitants are likely to lose their livelihood from commercial oil production.

The Keta Workshop was held in Ewe on 16 December 2018 with the abovementioned issues in the background. It brought together municipal and fisheries officials, GNCFC, and fishworkers from the Keta Municipal and neighbouring Ketu South Municipal.

Registration and Introductory Remarks

The Workshop commenced with registration of participants and introductory remarks by Mr. David Danquah, Team Leader of the Ewe translation. He then asked participants to introduce themselves and give their brief work experience in small-scale fisheries. He explained that, the Keta programme was the third in a series of three local language based workshops geared towards the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines in Ghana. He stated that the Workshop was designed to enable stakeholders in small-scale fisheries deliberate on the FAO VG-SSF and explore how they can play an active role in disseminating and implementing the Guidelines in their native language to safeguard their livelihood and future.

Current Interventions in Small Scale Fishery [MOFAD]

Mr. Promise Gavor, a representative of the Fisheries Commission in the Keta Municipal Assembly began his address with an overview of the small-scale fishery sector in the municipality and the support his outfit offers to fishworkers along the value chain. He observed that the marine and inland fishery activities were the backbone of their local economy and important contributor to food security, income and employment.

Mr. Gavor highlighted the different fisheries in the municipality and noted that each fishery was unique, determining the fishing gears and methods of fishing. In the Marine Subsector, Beach Seine, Ali, Watsa, Drill Gill and Set Nets were generally used whereas Cage Culture, Pond Culture and Flood Plain fishery were practiced in the Inland Fishery. Next, he touched on the role of women in fish processing. He mentioned that his outfit has been supporting women fish processors by organizing them into cooperatives, building their capacity through training and assisting them to have access to credit from banks, particularly Agricultural Development Bank and Anlo Rural Bank.

Regarding declining fish stocks, Mr. Gavor noted that the trend was alarming and will worsen unless the sensitive ecology that supports the fishery is restored. He pointed out that; human-induced factors [such as unapproved fishing methods] and climate change were responsible for disturbing the fishery ecology. For these reasons, the entire Keta Lagoon and its basin covering some 1200 km² is a protected area not only for sheltering migratory birds and sea turtles but also to support small-scale fishery. He said it was encouraging that many fishers, having seen the linkage between unsustainable fisheries and declining stocks; have been calling for stricter monitoring and enforcement of the fishery regulations and by-laws. He added that the recently introduced Closed Season and additional Fishing Holiday on Sunday were all designed to reduce the pressure of fishing efforts and rejuvenate the fish stocks over time. Mr. Gavor concluded by entreating fishers and fishworkers to support new initiatives in the offing including registration of canoes and introduction of identity cards for fishers.

Organisational Challenges and Achievements in SSF [GNCFC]



The presentation on organisational challenges and achievements in small-scale fisheries was led by Togbui Sri Abussi, the Volta Regional Chairman of the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council [GNCFC]. He commended ICSF and TESCOD Ghana for an initiative that was entirely local content-based and showed the proper way of engagement with the small-scale fisheries sector.

Torgbui Sri Abbusi highlighted the key role played by the Volta Regional branch of the GNCFC as two-fold: ensuring cohesion within the small-scale fisheries sector and promoting sustainable fisheries. He observed that the current challenges facing small-scale fisheries did not come by chance but a combination of factors including institutional lapses and weak enforcement of laws and regulations as well as exclusion of fishers and local community leaders from management of the fishery resources. As a result; the small-scale fisheries sector was not contributing as much as it should to the livelihoods of fishworkers and the national economy.

In addition, fishing communities were experiencing high levels of poverty and many had lost their livelihoods due to the influx of migrant fishers from Republic of Togo and Ada [Greater Accra] who resort to destructive fishing methods. He stressed the need for stronger collaboration between the Keta Municipal Assembly, NGOs, FWOs, CBOs and fishing communities to tackle the challenges in the sector with a united sense of purpose and urgency. He assured ICSF and TESCOD Ghana of their readiness to help in disseminating and implementing the Voluntary Guidelines within their various local communities.

Introduction of the FAO VG-SSF and Workshop Objectives [TESCOD Ghana]

Peter Adjei opened his address by expressing appreciation to the Workshop participants and the international and local support TESCOOD Ghana received in organizing the event. He mentioned in particular the role played by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers [ICSF] in seeking funding from the FAO alongside the support from the founder of TESCOOD Ghana – Mr. David Eli, Chief Director of MOFAD, Prof F.K.E Nunoo, Nii Abeo Kyerekuandah, [national chairman of GNCFC] and Torgbui Sri Abbusi, [Volta regional chairman of GNCFC].

After expatiating on the pioneering work of Human Rights advocacy in SSF by John Kurien, Chandrika Sharma and other founding members of ICSF, Peter Adjei revealed that; the idea of an international guidelines on Human Rights in SSF gained wide international acceptance and later, other CSOs such as the World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers [WFF] and World Forum of Fisher Peoples [WFFP] joined the campaign. He pointed out that the FAO VG-SSF were adopted after an extended period of international consultations and highlighted some key facts:

- FAO VG-SSF represent a major achievement towards ensuring secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries
- FAO VG-SSF are the result of a bottom-up participatory development process
- FAO VG-SSF are the result of a consultative process – TESCOOD Ghana participated in the initial consultations in 2013 at Grand Bassam, Ivory Coast
- FAO VG-SSF were facilitated by FAO - involved more than 4000 representatives of governments, small-scale fishers, fish workers and their organizations, researchers, development partners and other relevant stakeholders from over 120 countries in six regional and over 20 civil society organisation-led national consultative meetings.
- FAO VG-SSF were endorsed by the 31st Session of COFI in June 2014.
- FAO VG-SSF are voluntary, global in scope and with a focus on the needs of developing countries.

Peter Adjei explained that; since the adoption of the VG-SSF by FAO in 2014, local and international events have been organized to promote awareness about the Voluntary Guidelines. He mentioned that, two workshops had already been held in Accra and Takoradi and the Keta Workshop was the third. After the local workshops, a national workshop will be organized with a broader national and stakeholder focus. He outlined the objectives of the Keta Workshop as follows:

- To inform participants from Keta Municipal and Ketu South Municipal about the guiding principles of the VG-SSF within the local context.
- To contribute towards understanding how the VG-SSF seeks to address the various problems and issues in SSF with special reference to gender, child labour, trade, resource management and tenure rights and access.
- To identify practical ways in which the VG-SSF can be implemented at the local community level.

Video Documentary on the FAO VG-SSF



Informed by Workshop objectives, a video documentary session was provided to highlight the relevance of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines and other key issues and dimensions in Small-Scale Fishery in Tanzania, India and Costa Rica.

- *FAO Policy Series on Sustainable Small Scale Fishery*: Nicole Franz and Yvette Diei Ouadi draw attention to the importance of SSF and livelihood and challenges. They also offer compelling reasons why governments, FWOs and CSOs need to support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines.
- *ICSF's 'The Sea of Change'*: The video does not only documents traditional fishworkers perspective of Climate Change in India but, also offers food-for-thought on the socio-economic, political, cultural and technological factors affecting the sea ecology; applicable to the Ghanaian SSF context.
- *Women in SSF- Tanzania*: This striking video provides a clear picture of the role of women in the fish value chain in Tanzania, their challenges and opportunities and the need to valorize their contribution to Food Security.
- *FAO-CoopeSolidar R.L Video*: The short documentary highlights the social and economic importance of women shrimp fishers in Barra del Colorado in Costa Rica. Particular emphasis is also placed on the importance of capacity building and alternative income generating activities in the face of changing regulations.

Highlights of the FAO VG-SSF



Owing to the presentations in the Ewe language and Ewe translated texts, there was much anticipation for the highlights of the Voluntary Guidelines. The preceding speakers and video documentaries have not only highlighted the significance of SSF in Food Security, but also underscored the human-rights case for small-scale fisheries across the globe.

Led by Mr. David Danquah, the Team Leader for the Ewe translation, participants were guided through the 8-page abridged document. First, there were highlights and explanation of the guiding principles of the FAO VG-SSF, i.e., human rights and dignity, respect of cultures, non-discrimination, gender equality and equity, equity and equality, rule of law, consultation and participation, transparency, accountability, economic, social and environmental sustainability, holistic and integrated approaches, social responsibility, feasibility and social and economic viability.

Second, the Team Leader read the entire thematic portions of the document as the participants followed along with the reading in their personal copies. In many instances, he had to pause to explain the meaning or context of an expression and to modify the text to reflect the understanding of participants.

Priority Areas and Open Discussion

After the highly participatory highlights of the FAO VG-SSF and lunch break, the second half of the workshop commenced as an open discussion to identify challenges and opportunities for solutions and/or innovation in the light of the Guidelines. This session followed the pattern adopted in Accra and Takoradi where all the participants took part in an open discussion.

The session was moderated by Mr. David Danquah and Mr. Albert Aryeh. Mr. Promise Gavor [Fisheries Commission, Keta Municipal Assembly] and Peter Adjei [TESCOD Ghana/ICSF] acted as Resource Persons on government policy and the FAO VG-SSF respectively.



Thematic Areas of Concern

The Keta Workshop participants identified with five major themes of the FAO VG-SSF and concurred that they addressed the deep-seated issues in small-scale fisheries.

- Theme 1: Governance and Tenure
- Theme 2: Social Development, Employment & Decent Work
- Theme 3: Value Chains, Post-Harvest & Trade
- Theme 4: Gender Equality
- Theme 5: Disaster Risks & Climate Change

Summary of Discussions

The Workshop participants through the five identified themes in the Guidelines discussed necessary areas of concern and offered their submissions for addressing identifies challenges, concerns and expectations. A summary of the discussions across the thematic areas is presented below.



Governance & Tenure

Participants have access to fishery resources – [fishing grounds, landing and processing sites etc.] but the security of tenure is threatened:

- The central government and regulatory bodies/agencies have direct control and oversight of fishing grounds and beaches. Fishers and fishworkers are not directly involved in management and decision-making.
- Livelihood is threatened by beachfront tourism development as there are no clear-cut guidelines and regulations for properties sited along the beach and on water.
- Possible loss of livelihood and aquatic life with the expected oil and gas exploration and establishment of petrochemical industry within the Keta Basin or environs.
- The space for pre and post-harvest activities is threatened as beachfront properties are being developed without regard to proper land use planning or consultations with local communities.

Participants outlined the needed actions as follows:

- Intensify campaign and lobbying for the Co-Management Bill to be passed in Parliament as soon as practicable;
- Device organic ways of engaging government/regulators to help ensure that developers are held accountable for their actions;
- Land use and planning must be revisited with a view to enacting specific regulations for beach front infrastructure and with adequate space provision for pre and post-harvest activities;
- There is an urgent need to educate investors/businesses, law enforcement agencies and communities about sustainable land use and the role and responsibilities of stakeholders.



Social Development, Employment & Decent Work

Participants stated that the living and working conditions of fishers, fishworkers and their communities were very basic and deplorable:

- Only few communities have access to social amenities such as clinics, schools and portable water;
- Most fishing communities do not have access to even rudimentary social infrastructure such as public places of convenience;
- Living and working conditions are not health-sensitive, with increasing plastic waste pollution;

- Child labour and trafficking still prevalent especially among migrant fishers;
- High levels of poverty as fish landings are unpredictable and there are no alternative or supplementary livelihood opportunities.

Participants outlined the needed actions as follows:

- The central government together with local communities must develop policy and action plans that detail the infrastructural needs and projections for fishing communities;
- Central government through the appropriate regulatory bodies and agencies must provide adequate social amenities informed by present and future needs and with participation of fishing communities;
- Central government must partner, liaise and collaborate with local municipal authorities to support local leaders, CBOs, youth groups etc to address identified sanitation problems;
- Stricter enforcement of all applicable laws on Child Labour and Trafficking [CLaT];
- Local community leaders and FWOs must spearhead campaigns on social protection; in particular retirement pension, healthcare and accident/disability insurance.

Value Chains, Post-Harvest & Trade



Participants said that because women were typically engaged in post-harvest and trade than actual catching of fish; past interventions had focused mostly on addressing challenges of women instead of a more holistic approach; i.e., well-regulated and efficient value chains, post-harvest and trade:

- Lack of modern landing ports leading to labour intensive and poor handling of fish
- High incidence of post-harvest losses
- Despite improvements, many processing sites do not meet recommended standards
- Health risks associated with hazardous processing methods
- Lack of credit limits access to improved processing and storage methods
- Capacity building programmes mostly focus on women fishworkers
- Corrupt border control practices that affects regional fish trade

Participants outlined the needed actions as follows:

- Landing sites should be modernized and made efficient;
- Continued sensitization of post-harvest handling standards;
- Reducing post-harvest losses through improved processing, storage, packaging, transport and marketing with participation of all stakeholders [local communities, FWOs/ CSOs and fisheries regulatory bodies];
- Formation [and/or strengthening] of credible and accountable cooperatives for mutual negotiation and credit application;
- Capacity building of all stakeholders for long term sustainability;
- Border control and regulations must be properly regulated to favour fish trade in the West Africa sub region.

Gender Equality

Participants acknowledged that a major barrier to gender equality is the misperception that gender deals *only with concerns of women and girls*. This view, they agreed have been aggravated by past interventions that sought to empower women but not working with both women and men:

- The general participation in decision-making by women in small-scale fisheries [traditional] governance and management is very low; except in activities considered to be 'traditional role of women'
- Lack of awareness about legislations that uphold gender equality and equity;
- Failure by state institutions to punish perpetrators of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Marginalisation of women and girls through entrenched cultural practices that assign gender-based occupational roles.

Participants outlined the needed actions as follows:

- Continued education on gender rights and responsibilities;
- Community leaders, FWOs and municipal authorities should involve women in community interventions and encourage them to participate in decision-making;
- Formation of community-based women's groups to train and build capacity of women together with men;
- Local community leaders and municipal authorities must ensure fair access by both men and women to opportunities such as technology transfer, credit facilities and extension education.



Disaster Risks & Climate Change

Participants said apart from human-induced threats to the small-scale fisheries sector, the threats posed by climate change were real though gradual:

- Frequent tidal waves destroying houses canoes, nets, and outboard motors;
- The fishing communities of Hove, Vodza, Kedzi and Blekusu were so much devastated by tidal waves in June 2017 that it rendered 1700 residents homeless;
- Early warning mechanisms institutions and agencies are not well equipped to give timely warning in advance;

- Government interventions in disaster risks have not been proactive; limited to post disaster efforts - distribution of relief items and healthcare assistance for affected persons;
- Some youths have resorted to sand mining activities on the beaches and this has gradually resulted in erosion in some parts of the coast.

Participants outlined the needed actions as follows:

- The Ghana Meteorological Services must establish a clear channel of communicating relevant weather forecasts and early warning reports with fishing communities;
- The need to involve communities in climate change monitoring, disaster risk management and post-disaster rehabilitation;
- Closer coordination of sector stakeholders [Ghana Meteorological Services, Environmental Protection Agency, National Disaster Management Organisation etc] with fishing communities.
- Education of communities on sustainable management of the coastal ecology to safeguard small-scale fisheries and food security;
- Capacity building and training of the youth in alternative work opportunities.

Concluding Remarks

Most participants after the open discussion felt the Keta Workshop far exceeded their expectations. Grace Kowornu of Cooperative Havedzi said “having attended many workshops over the years, for the first time, I could see the bigger [global] picture of small-scale fisheries and the role of various stakeholders”. A similar view was echoed by Madam Dzienyikpor who concluded that the interconnectedness of the crosscutting issues discussed made sense for all stakeholders to work together to realize the objectives of the FAO VG-SSF.

Torgbui Seth Abotsi commended ICSF and TESCOG Ghana for a rich local content programme in the mother tongue of the participants. He remarked that the FAO VG-SSF provided a systematic approach to addressing challenges in the small-scale fisheries sector and they will play their part while holding other stakeholders to account. Torgbui Gada observed that; the Guidelines offered the opportunity to right the ills and social injustice in the small-scale fisheries sector, and for all actors to work towards more sustainable and responsible fisheries.

Mr. Promise Gavor of the Fisheries Commission, Keta Municipal noted that the FAO VG-SSF is a monumental achievement in SSF and should all stakeholders play their roles, the sector’s contribution to food nutrition, employment and taxes will appreciate but the ultimate beneficiaries will be fishworkers. Peter Adjei thanked all the participants and encouraged them to work together with other stakeholders to implement the Voluntary Guidelines in order to safeguard their livelihoods and live a life of dignity.

ANNEX 1 A: PROGRAMME – EWE (KETA) LOCAL WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FAO VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON SMALL SCALE FISHERIES IN EWE

DATE: Sunday 16 December 2018

VENUE: Keta Municipal Assembly, Keta V/R

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY
8:30 – 9:00	Arrival and registration	Mr. Richard Kyei
9:00 – 9:30	Introductions and climate setting	Mr. David Danquah
9:30 – 10:00 9:30 9:40 9:50	Presentation 1: MOFAD/FC – Current interventions in SSF GNCFC – Challenges & Achievements ICSF – The Human Rights Approach in SSF	MOFAD/FC Representative GNCFC Representative ICSF Representative
10:00 – 10:30	Presentation 2: Introduction of the SSF Guidelines & Workshop Objectives	Peter Adjei
10:30 – 11:00	Video Documentary	
11:00 – 11:30	Snack Break	
11:30 – 12:30	Presentation 3: Highlights of the SSF Guidelines (with questions & answers)	Mr. David Danquah Mr. Albert Aryeh Peter Adjei Mr. Promise Gavor
12:30 -1:00	Lunch	
1:00 – 3:00	Open Discussion/ Plenary & Way Forward	All
	Group photograph	
	Departure	

ANNEX 1 B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS – EWE (KETA) LOCAL WORKSHOP

Name	Institution/Organisation	Address
Doe Nkekeshie	GNCFC/VR	Anloga/Tel: 0243576701
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Abokye Philip	GNCFC/VR	Keta/Tel: 0245738588
Ahuaphe Azeledzi	GNCFC/VR	Keta/Tel: 0241996766
Yaw Tetteh Etsei	GNCFC/VR	Keta/Tel: 0244219622
Moses Bosoo	GNCFC/VR	Adina/Tel: 0242639345
Adogbahu Keledzi	GNCFC/VR	Adina/Tel: 0248033510
Togbui Gada	GNCFC/VR	Abutiakope/Tel: 0247899828
Promise Gavor	Fisheries Commission	Keta/Tel: 0247232456
Jennifer Glover	Fisheries Commission	Keta/Tel: 0208831144
Kedeku Catherine	Market Queen	Ketu South/Tel: 0548891552
Gavor Faustina	Market Queen	Ketu South/Tel: 0242485781
Freedom Vitashie	Ministry of Information	Keta/Tel: 0243031640
Assah Eben	GNCFC/VR	Keta/Tel: 0244228943
Amadey Cecelia	Fish Processor	Keta/Tel: 0242735718
Atsu Nyamadi	GNCFC/VR	Keta/Tel: 0246603922
Torgbui Seth Abotsi	GNCFC/VR	Keta/Tel: 0243115407
Afedzi Fianu	GNCFC/VR	Keta/Tel: 0541831512
Selomy Awuye	Fish Processor	Ketu South/Tel: 0242639345
Madam Dzienyikpor	Fish Processor	Ketu South/Tel: 0242806099
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Albert Aryeh	Translator/Linguist	Accra/Tel: 0243173441
Richard Kyei	Translator/Linguist	Accra/Tel: 0272131252
Benjamin Nyampong	TUC Ghana	Accra/Tel: 0540106647
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