**National VG-SSF Platform of Ghana**

**Maiden Physical Meeting, University of Ghana**

**15 August 2019**

 **REPORT**

1. A two-day national workshop on the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines in small-scale fisheries (VG-SSF) in Ghana was organised at the University of Ghana from Wednesday 14August to Thursday 15August 2019. On 15 August, during the lunch break, the first physical meeting of the National VG-SSF Platform was held to discuss its role in disseminating the VG-SSF in Ghana.
2. The under listed members of the VG-SSF Platform were present:
* Mr. Mike Abaka-Edu – GNCFC Western Region
* Ms. Jennifer Glover – Dep. of Fisheries, Keta Municipal Assembly
* Mr. Nicholas Smith – Programmes Director, CEWEFIA
* Peter Adjei – Director, TESCOD/ICSF
* Mr. Jacob Tetteh Ageke – President, NICFC
* Mr. David Kotane Kaku – GNCFC, Axim
* Mr. Ambrose Kojo Mensah – GNCFC, Axim
1. **Nomination of Group Moderator**

Peter Adjei was nominated to moderate the meeting.

1. **Proposed VG-SSF Platform Action Plan**

In the light of the broader issues coming from the local and national workshops, Peter Adjei said it will be appropriate for the VG-SSF Platform to focus on fewer and succinct national issues that resonate with fishworkers at the local level. He said past national level networks did not work well because clarity was lacking as they focused on too many issues and campaigns.

Adding on to Peter Adjei’s comments, Ms. Jennifer Glover noted that mass media especially radio could be employed to get the Voluntary Guidelines across to fishworkers but before that; the Platform should collaborate with as many community-based fish worker organisations (CBFWOs) and traditional authorities to elicit their views on the Guidelines so radio message could be properly tailored to the fishworker audience.

On the subject of *medium of disseminating the VG-SSF*, Peter Adjei said it was very important to consider cost-effective means as the Platform was voluntary and did not have a running budget for campaigns at that point.

Mr. David Kotane Kaku responded that the Platform could arrange for short educational campaigns on the Voluntary Guidelines at community centres and beachfronts. Even with that he acknowledged that some modest funds are needed to kick-start the campaigns. He proposed that members could pull resources together and collectively work on smaller projects or educational tours.

At this point, Peter Adjei pointed out that the Platform has established CBFWOs, traditional authorities and fishing communities as important stakeholders and posed the question - to what extent should the Platform collaborate with other stakeholders?

Mr. Jacob Tetteh Ageke emphasized that local government authorities, namely the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are equally important as they either influence or implement fishery policies. He also stated that regulatory authorities must be included in any future collaborative efforts.

At this juncture, Mr. Nicholas Smith joined in the discussion to say that the Platform should have a holistic view approach to disseminating the Voluntary Guidelies and for this reason, all relevant stakeholders must be included. After briefly fine-tuning the submissions and issues, the members agreed to outline specific objectives to inform any action plans in the future. The objectives are:

* To work collaboratively with FWOs, CSOs, media houses, MOFAD and Academia to sustain and expand the awareness of the FAO VG-SSF at national and subnational level;
* To monitor and document activities that are related to the implementation of the VG-SSF in Ghana and
* To promote the alignment of the VG-SSF with national fisheries policies/laws through appropriate media campaign, petitions to appropriate authorities and/or representations at relevant fisheries stakeholders’ fora.
1. **Approval of Next Meeting**

By consensus, it was agreed that the next physical meeting will be held in January 2020. It was also agreed that dialogue may be initiated by any member through social media but physical meetings will be held twice a year.

1. **CLOSING**

Peter Adjei closed the meeting by thanking the members for their participation.