

## **POVERTY AND POST HARVEST FISH UTILISATION WORKSHOP, JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup> 2002, GHANA: WORKSHOP REPORT**

### **Opening**

The meeting was organised by the Directorate of Fisheries on behalf of the project and held at the Directorate of Fisheries headquarters in Accra on June 11<sup>th</sup> 2002. The meeting began at 1000hrs and finished at 1245. Participants were from the Directorate of Fishers and the Ghana National Co-ordinating Unit of the FAO/DFID Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme. A list of participants is provided in Annex1. Mrs Doris Yeboah chaired the opening of the meeting. The opening prayer was given by Ms Matilda Quist. Participants then gave self introductions before the floor was handed to Mr Ansen Ward, the Project Leader from IMM Ltd.

Mr Ward welcomed everyone before giving the aim of the meeting which was twofold. Firstly to introduce and describe the Post Harvest Overview Tool and for participants to air initial feedback on the tool. Secondly to highlight key issues not covered in the earlier March workshop which would feed into the Ghana Overview. These issues were to be derived from discussions related to planning and policy related to the post-harvest sector and key changes which are taking place in relation to transformation and consumption of fish in Ghana.

### **The Post Harvest Overview**

After providing a summary of the background to the project including an outline of the demand for the project in Ghana, Mr Ward described the Post Harvest Overview Tool (PHOT) produced by DFID Project R7799 India Fish Utilisation. He explained the tool was in draft form and that its application in Ghana would not only enable the tool to be refined and developed further for global use, but that it would also enable a Post Harvest Overview for Ghana (PHOG) to be developed. It was also explained that the PHOT was not developed for India or other countries in South Asia, but that it was developed based on global experience and understanding of post-harvest and poverty issues.

Highlighting that the PHOT will be further developed so that it complements the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, it was stated that as well as providing an information resource for end users such as Government of Ghana (GoG), NGOs and the private sector, the PHOG would in essence raise the profile of the post-harvest fisheries sector. Something which discussions the previous day with the Director of Fisheries revealed was particularly pertinent, in view of the current GoG focus on post-harvest issues.

Furthermore, it was explained that the PHOG would not be a panacea for the development of the sector, but rather it would bring a number of key issues under one roof and aid the prioritisation of development initiatives. It was also highlighted that due to the nature of the sector and the fact that things change so fast, aspects of the PHOG would require updating from time to time.

The main potential uses of the PHOT were described – aid dissemination, identify and target pro-poor interventions, guide choices, strengthen the ability of civil society organizations, design and implement development initiatives.

Each of the five main components of the PHOT were summarised: the macro context; what is happening now in terms of supply, transformation and consumption; changes and the cause of change; the impact of change; and, interventions.

The approach that would be used to develop the PHOG was described in general terms. It was anticipated that a draft PHOG would be produced by the end of June and that this would be reviewed by a team of in-country stakeholders. A workshop would be held to discuss a final draft in September. The PHOG would eventually be published as a DoF/DFID document. And that the PHOT would be developed as one of the two globally applicable tools developed by the research.

### **PHOT – Initial Feedback**

Participants had been given a copy of the draft PHOT prior to the meeting and had been encouraged to read it beforehand.

Participant comments on the PHOT were as follows:

- Thorough document which covered the main issues of interest and concern.
- In the PHOG it will be important to provide detailed guidelines about interventions in the sector and how these can solve specific problems.
- It is likely that primary research will be needed to address the aspects to do with changes in the sector and the impact these are having.
- That whilst the DoF were incorporating aspects of the CCRF into fisheries management initiatives, they had not yet begun to do this for the post-harvest sector and the PHOG would help them to do this.
- Whilst the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) was recognised by GoG and some NGOs, there is a lack of awareness of it at the community level.
- The PHOG should describe the key institutions of the post-harvest sector and their roles. It should also recognise the importance of traditional authorities and beliefs and how these can influence interventions.
- The PHOG will help guide the various institutions which intervene in the sector to focus on the key issues.
- The PHOG should include information on the numbers and locations of processors and traders to aid the targeting of interventions.

### **Plans, Policy and Projects**

DoF policy for the post-harvest sector is focussed on the important food security contribution the sector makes. Current interventions are the provision of credit to fish processors and traders to enable them to buy fish to process and store for sale during the lean season. Other initiatives are concerned with reducing post-harvest losses.

The Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana along with counterpart institutions in Burkina Faso, Togo, Ivory Coast and Mali are to be involved in the forthcoming Integrated Volta Basin Project which is aiming to improve the livelihoods of those who rely on the catchment area. This includes fishermen who depend on the various rivers

for their livelihoods. It was noted that many of the river areas have undergone severe environmental degradation due to natural resource use.

Friends of the Earth are anticipating beginning a project later in the year which will aim to develop a Ghana version of the CCRF for raising community awareness.

Processors in Moree are benefiting from an SFLP initiative concerned with woodlots and improved fish smoking practices.

### **Changes in Transformation**

Participants identified the following key changes which have occurred with regard to the handling, processing and distribution of fish:

- There has been an increase in the consumption of fresh tilapia in urban areas. This is leading to less tilapia being salted and dried or smoked. Fish mammals are now selling to fresh fish traders who travel from urban areas with ice to buy fish fresh. This has displaced former processors from the chain. There are some former smoking areas where no fish is processed anymore.
- There has been an increase in the smoking of fish around inland urban cold stores such as those in Kumasi. Processors are congregating in these areas to smoke frozen marine fish.
- There has been an increase in the quantities of frozen small pelagics. Most of which (approx 80%) are smoked.
- Tilapia is being imported from Thailand both frozen and fingerlings for aquaculture.
- Fuelwood is becoming acutely scarce in northern and coastal areas.
- Hard wood for smoking is now difficult to get. Chainsaw operators are now being arrested and this has reduced the supply of off cuts which processors bought and used for fish smoking. Different fuels are being used for fish smoking including vegetable matter, cardboard from cartons of frozen fish, and acacia from wood lots. Some non-traditional fish smoking woods produce too much smoke, blackening the product.
- A favourable exchange rate in Togo and Benin has led to an increase in the export of smoked fish to those countries.
- The size of freshwater fish available on the market has decreased and these are also thought to have a different taste.
- The use of chorkor smokers has increased because they smoke fish quicker, are easy to use and more healthy than traditional ovens.
- Attempts are being made to introduce a gas powered fish smoking oven.
- Fish is now no longer dumped on the beach at times when there are high catches.

### **Changes in Consumption**

Participants were asked to identify changes in fish consumption. These were:

- People are now not able to get their preferred species and they are now eating either less preferred species, canned fish, eggs or imported frozen chicken.
- People are still consuming fish but are now consuming less.
- The causes of the decline in consumption were described as: high cost of overheads, reduced supply due to overexploitation and an increase in exports.
- There has been an increase in the use of poisons to catch fish and the affect of consumption of this fish on the consumer needs to be understood.
- Fish was thought to be more available to certain rural populations which have less access to other animal protein sources.
- Fish is now relatively expensive and sometimes difficult to get. Grade fish from a retail outlet on the outskirts of Accra is selling for 20,000 cedis / kg.
- Most Ghanaians eat fish except for a very few vegetarians who have particular dietary or religious reasons.
- Certain people will not eat certain species because of traditional beliefs e.g. barracuda is not eaten by certain people in Eastern region.
- Stunted growth amongst the population has been recently reported in the media.

#### **Closing remarks by Mr Ansen Ward**

Mr Ward thanked participants for their contributions and looked forward to meeting everyone again in the future, most likely at the next project workshop in late September/early October. Those who were not present at the March workshop were handed copies of the workshop report.

**ANNEX 1: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS**

Ms Doris Yeboah	Senior Agric Economist	Fisheries Dept. PO Box 630, Accra
Mr E M Mensah	Head of Marine Fisheries	Fisheries Dept, PO Box 630, Accra
Ms Matilda Quist	Senior Fisheries Officer	Fisheries Dept. Tema
Ms Victoria Koomson	CEWEFIA	PO Box EL25, Elmina
Ms Gladys Nerquaye-Tetteh	Senior Research Scientist	Food Research Institute, PO Box M20 Accra
Ms Salome Anson	GWW	PO Box 7455, Accra-North
Ms Grace Quaye	Fish Processor	PO Box 836, Mamprobi/Accra
Mr George Awudi	Programme Co-ordinator	Friends of the Earth, Ghana PMB
Dr Peter Ziddah	Senior Veterinary Officer	Fisheries Dept, PO Box 630, Accra
Ms Patricia Dovi Sampson	Assistant Director	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
Mr Daniel Quaynor	Deputy Director	Dept. of Fisheries, PO Box 630, Accra