

# "Info-Flash" the SFLP ... on the move ...



Welcome to the

## SFLP Info-Flash

This new means of communication will be forwarded monthly through Internet to the National Coordination Units, FAO Representations, DFID and to the Fisheries Department of FAO.

The overriding objective of this **SFLP Info-Flash** is to provide the 25 member countries with the most up to date information on the Programme.

Please feel free to contact SFLP at any time you have any information on events in your country.

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Issue 30 – July/August 2003

### Niger – National workshop on the role of fisheries PIP in poverty reduction

A 2-day national workshop was organised, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2003, by the Niger National Coordination Unit in collaboration with the Ministry of Water, Environment and Desertification Control, with SFLP support. The event was used to discuss the results of a study on policies, institutions and processes (PIP) and to brainstorm on the role of fisheries in poverty reduction efforts. The workshop was inaugurated by the Minister of Water, Environment and Desertification Control, and attended by local and national government officials, representatives of national associations of fish processors, fishers, fish-mongers, NGOs, development partners, and other relevant non-fisheries institutions.

Preliminary results from the PIP study, which had been conducted earlier in the year by a multi-disciplinary team of experts, showed that fisheries are an important part of rural development in some parts of the country. It also indicated that the sector has not received enough consideration in the formulation of development and poverty reduction policies.

The workshop was targeted at a senior level in order to promote the integration of fisheries in government policies and identify entry points for the improvement of fisheries livelihoods. After the presentation of results from the

PIP study, participants shared their different experiences, which were in turn used to improve and validate the findings, and draw up a set of recommendations.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) committee who used the results of this process (PIP study and the workshop report), expressed appreciation for the efforts being made to ensure that fisheries are included in development policies and to enhance the visibility of the sector in the PRSP. The workshop and PIP study helped the Poverty Reduction Strategy preparation committee to add a 4th priority programme to the Rural Development Strategy, focusing exclusively on fisheries and fish breeding. This programme emphasises: (i) organisational development in fisheries communities, (ii) the management and rehabilitation of the aquatic ecosystems



The results of the PIP study led to rich exchanges among participants at the national fisheries workshop in Niger.

(iii) access to micro credit in fisheries communities, and (iv) hydro-agricultural management system, i.e. development of enhanced fisheries along small lakes and rice fields.

Furthermore, the fact that the Niger NCU was able to establish contact with the RDS/PRS committee will enable it defend the interests of fisheries communities during the preparation of the budget scheduled for the end of 2003.

The workshop was found to be an effective way of facilitating the process of policy and institutional change. By helping decision-makers to obtain a better understanding of the role of fisheries in poverty reduction, Policies and Institutions may become more sensitive to poverty reduction issues in fisheries. The workshop provided useful information on the fisheries sector at the National Forum on Poverty Reduction that immediately followed (7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> June), attended by representatives of national institutions and donors. The next step towards the better integration of fisheries into the PRSP will be the formulation of a fisheries sector programme before the end of the year.

Ongoing NCU lobbying activities and the workshop process were key factors in the provision of 220 million FCFA (approximately 370.000 USD) through the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative which has been made to support the fisheries sector in 2003.

### Nigeria - NCU in closer touch with fisheries communities

The National Coordination Unit (NCU) of Nigeria has been decentralised into four Local Coordination Units (LCU). According to the National Coordinator, G.N. Shimang, the LCUs have been set up to ensure the efficient implementation and monitoring of SFLP activities in fisheries communities far from Abuja. The 4 LCUs operate in states with ongoing community projects: Kano (*Tiga dam management for improved biodiversity and resource utilisation towards co-management*), Borno (*Capacity building in community-based lake fisheries management Daban Masara, Kukawa*), Delta (*Capacity building to reduce fish post-harvest losses for women fishmongers and processors groups in Illah Oshimili*) and Cross River (*Capacity building for improved access to appropriate*

*fisheries technologies for fisheries communities in Nka Iyak Esuk Edibe Edibe).*

Under the new system the 4 LCUs operate autonomously and report back to the NCU on a regular basis. The LCUs have been holding regular meetings with community members and local government officials, the minutes of which are being systematically passed on to the NCU. This process enables the NCU to gain a clear picture of community project implementation in the field, make observations and offer advice.

#### **Chad – Exchange visit and more**

An eight member delegation from Chad made an exchange visit to Benin to learn about micro-credit, organisational development and legal / institutional frameworks from the National Coordination Unit (NCU) in Cotonou from 23rd to 25th June 2003. The delegation included representatives from the Lake Fitri fishermen's organization, NGO Apibase, a micro finance institution, and the Ministry of Planning Decentralization Service. Four women from the N'djamena fish mongers association and a women's group from the Ere community project were also present.

The delegation was divided into two groups according to background. One group visited the fishermen's umbrella organization (*Union Nationale des Pêcheurs Maritimes du Bénin* - UNAPEMAB) at the Cotonou port. They examined how the SFLP community project has contributed to strengthening socio-professional associations and how these groups relate to the umbrella organisation.

The other group improved their understanding of the administrative and management aspects of the micro-finance sector in Cotonou by visiting *Initiative-Development*, the Beninese small-scale enterprises development programme (PADME), the income-generating activities management project (PAGER), *FINADEV*, *Vital-Finance* and the micro-finance unit of the Ministry of Finance. They also visited the *Alafia Consortium group* and the small businessmen's organisation and promotion exchange agency ECHOPPE which provided them with information on how to produce treated mosquito nets as an alternative economic activity. Feedback sessions were held at the end of each day to exchange notes and maximise the learning experience.

Lots of information and many views were exchanged during the visit. Important findings included the flexibility of the credit policy which offers a moratorium, and the proximity of collectors to beneficiaries, an arrangement that makes it easier for members to respect their repayment obligations. They also found the various alternative activities run by the women and the training provided by loan collectors very interesting. The strength of the organizational base and standard of micro-finance management capacity were also noted as important factors.

The visiting group took the chance to clarify some of their ongoing activities with the Regional Support Unit (RSU) staff before leaving. The delegation will share their observations upon their return home and plan to challenge their colleagues in Chad to develop a more cooperative system.

#### **Gabon - Government approves a budget for NCU**

The government of Gabon has approved the provision of additional financial assistance for their NCU. This money will supplement the support provided by the Sustainable Fisheries

Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) and is a clear indication that the government is recognising the NCU's strategic role as an instrument of change in rural development and poverty reduction efforts.

Recent work in Gabon has included the design and implementation of a training course at a small-scale fisheries youth training centre. The course content will highlight the relevance of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) guiding principles and aspects of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in poverty reduction in small-scale fisheries communities. NCU member and President of the Owendo Fisheries Community Centre and socio-professional organisations' representative, R. Minko, will teach the course to twenty-four fishermen in the first session.

#### **Burkina Faso – Cabinet adopts national fisheries development and management strategy**

The Council of Ministers in Burkina Faso examined and adopted the national fisheries strategy and a series of priority programmes for development and fisheries management on June 4<sup>th</sup> 2003. These decisions were stimulated by a proposal by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Fisheries Resources, whose priority was to revise the 1997 fisheries management strategy in line with the poverty reduction strategic framework and the national strategy for food security.

Former NCU officer and SFLP Pilot Project National Coordinator, H. Zerbo, participated in the strategy revision and formulation of the priority programmes. Detailed information on communities concerns and priorities were made available from the Poverty Profile work undertaken around the lakes Bagré and Kompienga. This profile provided baseline information for the priority programme formulation process. The participation of the Pilot Project National Coordinator in this exercise facilitated the application of SLA principles at each stage of the exercise, and the inclusion of some aspects of the CCRF.



**Sandogo, Burkina Faso: Training session on fishing gears.**

These national programmes will be co-ordinated with a range of measures to encourage education, adult literacy, access to credit, health care, and clean drinking water. This wide-ranging holistic approach is expected to contribute to development, and the reduction of vulnerability, in fisheries communities. A number of different technical departments including water resources, agricultural statistics, drinking water supply, micro-finance structures and development partners will work closely together in order to ensure effective implementation of the programmes.

The SFLP Pilot Project that has just started in Bagré and Kompienga will address a number of the issues raised in the

Ministry's priority programmes. These include the preparation of participatory fisheries management plans, the establishment of fisheries management committees, strengthening of the technical and organisational capacities of professional organisations, and the communities' participation in the local development process.

### Mid-Term Evaluation of SFLP

The SFLP has recently undertaken a Mid-Term Evaluation involving a review of the activities and processes that have been carried out since the Programme started in November 1999. The evaluation was undertaken in July 2003 by an experienced team of four: J. Muir (representing DFID), R. Chamberlain (representing the Fisheries Department, FAO), T. Aiazzi (Budget and Evaluation Department, FAO), and A. Manigui (Director of Agriculture, Benin, representing the 25 West African countries). The mission examined the efficiency and adequacy of the Programme's implementation, its approach to development priorities and needs, the impacts to date and their sustainability. The findings and recommendations of the mission will be finalised by September 2003 and will guide the Programme in the second half of its activities.

During the course of the mission the evaluation team held meetings with FAO staff and the SFLP Coordination Unit at the Headquarters in Rome, and with RSU staff in Cotonou. Two days were spent in meetings and discussions with 23 of the 25 National Coordinators to share information on their experiences with the Programme and express their visions for the future.

The mid-term evaluation mission selected and visited Benin, Mali, Guinea, Ghana and Congo. These visits were used to establish the progress in SFLP field activities and the extent to which National Coordination Units have applied the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) guiding principles and the Code of Conduct of Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) in their activities. A debriefing meeting was organised at the end of July with the RSU in Cotonou and with FAO in Rome.

Further discussion on the Mid-Term evaluation recommendations are scheduled with all the NCUs in November 2003. This will also give the opportunity to discuss the programmes direction for the remaining 3 years.

### Côte d'Ivoire – SFLP assists IFAD to train staff in SLA

The West African Division of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has requested further assistance from the SFLP for a SLA training workshop that was held from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> July in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. This workshop followed the event in Cotonou (May 2003) and was used to train IFAD field staff and consultants on SLA principles in development projects. More specifically, the workshop was designed to improve participants' knowledge and understanding of SLA guiding principles, their application in the field, and to encourage their dissemination to other development partners. This collaboration will strengthen the existing working partnership between the SFLP and IFAD.

The workshop served as a forum to introduce SLA principles and participatory appraisal tools and their relevance in rural development. In total there were 23 participants; including national experts from IFAD funded projects, government officials, NGOs and independent consultants. The response

was positive and participants obtained a clearer understanding of SLA tools and methodologies in improving project design and implementation.

The training is expected to facilitate the application of SLA in the implementation of three IFAD-funded projects in Côte d'Ivoire. The first of the projects, *Projet de commercialisation et initiatives locales dans la région centre nord* (PACIL), relates to the promotion of marketing and local initiatives, the second, *Projet de développement rural dans la région du Zanzan* (PDRZ), is a rural development project, while the third, *Projet d'appui aux petits producteurs maraîchers dans la région des savanes* (PPMS), will provide support to small garden market owners in the Savannah region.

### Chad, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, and the Central African Republic - Chad Basin study on contribution of marketing to the livelihoods of fisheries communities

The Chad NCU has set up a Fisheries Information Monitoring System (FIMS) to describe how fisheries products are sold in three selected markets: N'djamena, Kinassero and Moundou. This system is part of the SFLP-financed study on the contribution of fish marketing to the livelihoods of fisheries communities in 5 countries on the lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Niger and Nigeria). The system involves the collection of information on fishing practices, prices, catches volumes, cost differentials between processed and fresh fish, sales outlets and market trends by a team of researchers. The process is also used to raise awareness on best fishing practices, the importance of the sustainable management of the lake resources, and the most profitable processing techniques.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> regional stakeholders' meeting on the study was held from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2003, in Maiduguri, and was hosted by the National Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research (NIFFR). The objective was to discuss the findings of the study in the first six months and to plan the next two phases.



Data collectors record information on catches in a fisheries community in Chad.

Participants analysed the information and results so far obtained through the implementation of FIMS in each country. The next phase of the exercise will be to review national and international development narratives on fish-marketing policy. This will be followed by a survey of the relationship between stakeholders and the fish-marketing system.

A field trip was organised to Baga to visit the Federal College of Freshwater Fisheries Technology and the fish market before the meeting ended. A synthesis report on the findings of the study, as well as supplementary information from the

stakeholders will be prepared for presentation and validation at the final meeting to be held in Maroua (Cameroon) in December 2003. The study is being coordinated by the Centre for the Economics and Management of Aquatic Resources (CEMARE).

#### **Programme Steering Committee Meeting – Last 2 pilot projects adopted**

The formulation mission to design the two last Pilot Projects: “*Improved livelihoods in the artisanal post-harvest fisheries sector*” involving Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia and Senegal and “*Participatory coastal fisheries management and monitoring, control and surveillance*” involving Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania, were undertaken between May and June 2003. This was a fully participatory process involving NCU members and other stakeholder groups in each country.

The project documents then underwent a review process with the Programme Steering Committee, which was held in Cotonou on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2003. The proposals were reviewed and the activities in each country were discussed. This process has led to a number of recommendations and amendments to the documents, the final versions of which are being completed.

In the coming months, work on these Pilot Projects will focus on (i) the establishment of national teams in each country, and a regional coordination unit for each Pilot Project; (ii) the completion of the second stage of poverty profiling in each country, which will include a follow-up of the sample households to collect qualitative information on poverty indicators, and (iii) the presentation of the final project document and institutional arrangements in the 8 countries. The two Pilot Projects are expected to be launched before the end of 2003.

#### **New community projects**

- **Guinea:** (i) Support for the diversification of livelihoods in the Bongolon fisheries community and (ii) Support for the improvement of the livelihoods of female fish processors in Doyéma.
- **Cameroon:** Institutional support to enable fisheries communities to access HIPC initiative funding.
- **Sierra Leone:** Support in extending the coverage of sample households in small-scale fishing communities to be included in the Integrated Household Survey.