

"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.

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Democratic Republic of Congo – NCU on the move

The NCU in the Democratic Republic of Congo is making progress in addressing the priorities for 2003. A number of working groups have been set up within the NCU to handle specific tasks, a process which has improved information exchange considerably. This approach has produced encouraging results, for example one committee has established a partnership with the FAO Urban Horticultural Project (HUP) for the Pool Malebo fishery community. This project has agreed to train 9 groups of fisherfolk in the community in "Integrated Pest Management" for vegetable production in order to improve their diversification efforts. A local NGO, *Soutien et Encadrement des Pêcheurs Artisans du Congo* (SEPAC), will use the same training module to assist the remaining 30 groups in the community.

Micro-finance, because of its crucial role in improving the livelihoods of poor fisheries communities in Congo, is another important activity on the NCU's list of priorities. The NCU's finance committee has established contact with *Regroupement des Institutions du Système de Financement Décentralisé de Congo* (RIFIDEC), the umbrella organisation of micro-finance institutions in Kinshasa. Following a period of negotiation RIFIDEC has

agreed to train fish traders and fishermen in Pool Malebo in the basic principles of savings and credit, and how to manage small businesses. This training is expected to help the fisherfolk develop their fish processing and marketing activities, and facilitate diversification into other activities.

These achievements highlight the strategic advantages of a multi-disciplinary NCU membership in accomplishing its set objectives. It also effectively demonstrates how a well organised NCU and good communication flow can help improve its support to fisheries communities.



The project beneficiaries meeting to review activities

Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Niger and Sao Tome - Gender Manual workshop

A workshop was held in Cotonou from the 11th to the 14th of March 2003. The objective of the workshop was to produce a gender analysis and planning guide, as well as gender-specific tools for use in the field with fisheries communities. Participants included gender consultants (who led the case studies in Ghana, Niger, Gambia, Sao Tome and Benin), NCUs, NGOs, government institutions, communication experts, as well as FAO Regional Office representatives, staff from the RSU, and other development partners.

The workshop was facilitated by gender consultant, C. Gnimadi, with the support of RSU Project Officer, K. Holvoet. As this was the first activity of a series, special attention was given to the design of the field manual and accompanying

tools. This process was very productive and participants produced much information about their field experiences and the results obtained in the case studies. This feedback was used to improve the proposed guide. Group simulations were also used to test the efficacy of the tools in drawing gender-specific information in the field. Similar attention was given to the layout of the guide with participants contributing local sayings to make it more communicative at grassroot level.

The participants found these exercises particularly interesting as they were able to see the tools being gradually improved during the course of the workshop. The level of participation and the evaluation questionnaires completed at the end of each session show that the workshop has met participants' expectations. Many of them also went away with new ideas on how to improve their data collection techniques in the field.

Cameroon – Learning process emphasised

The Cameroon NCU, with the support of NGO CERAD, organised a workshop on the learning process for the participatory management of the Mapé dam. The workshop entitled *Negotiation and Learning by Doing*, was held from 4 to 6 March 2003 as part of the SFLP drive to improve institutional support to fisheries communities. About 50 participants drawn from the public sector (administrators, law enforcement agents), civil society, traditional rulers and fishermen attended the workshop.



Participants at the workshop on « Negotiation and Learning by doing »

The priorities identified by stakeholders include issues such as resource access, fishing rights, and the protection of fisheries resources. The establishment of an efficient monitoring mechanism around the lake, and a partnership arrangement with the Cameroon electricity/water company (AES SONEL) are being developed.

This exercise has provided a solid foundation to (i) improve social development in all fisheries communities around the lake, (ii) ensure the sustainable and profitable exploitation of fisheries resources, and (iii) encourage greater participation of stakeholders in the construction of community infrastructure.

Congo Brazzaville – Planning for sustainability

The community project to strengthen the development efforts of Makotipoko fishers started with a brainstorming session on how to prepare a joint development plan which would combine the priorities of the different groups within the community. The session was attended by representatives from the Committee of Elders, the Health and Market Committees, Fishermen's Cooperative (Copemak), *Association pour le Développement de la Commune de Makotipoko* (ADCM), NGO *l'Univers des Femmes* and other groups.

The main topic of discussion was the recent flooding in the area, which destroyed many village structures, including the community's meeting shed. It was agreed that the construction of a more permanent structure was a priority as this would establish participatory processes in planning and decision-taking, and generally improve social interactions in the community. Other activities to assist the community, within the community project, were also discussed.

Recognising the importance of communication in mobilising communities and disseminating best practices the NGO *Alliance-Homme Environnement d'Afrique* (AMEA) is providing support to establish an umbrella organisation for the fisheries community in Pointe Noire, and has designed a bi-

monthly Newsletter to publish information about their activities and experiences. The first issue was released in December 2002 and the NGO is currently seeking partners to ensure that the publication continues.

Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mali – Update on Pilot Project on Co-management

Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali, countries participating in the Pilot Project for co-management in inland waters, have identified their national offices in Tenkodogo (also regional office), Akosombo and Sélingué respectively. The project management teams of Burkina and Mali are already operational. They are currently setting up the pilot project office and preparing their annual workplan of activities for the first two quarters of 2003.

Moreover, the PMT's are working to improve awareness of the Pilot Project among primary beneficiaries, government departments, NGOs and other development partners. NCUs are also trying to improve their working relations with FAO Representative offices. The newly appointed Regional Coordinator in charge of this Pilot Project, F. Turay, recently undertook a mission to these three countries to prepare for the Pilot Project start.

Benin - Agbodjèdo Fish-smoking Centre inaugurated ...

The Agbodjèdo Fish-smoking Centre in Cotonou, which benefited from a FAO Tele-Food project and later from SFLP institutional support, was inaugurated on 27 February 2003. Primary beneficiaries, mainly women, were fully represented for the occasion, along with representatives of other fisheries stakeholders and development partners. Also present was the rural development mobilisation centre (*Centre d'Action Régionale pour le Développement Rural* - CARDER), which works closely with the beneficiaries on a regular basis.

The NCU of Benin assisted the centre in establishing a management committee, designing a monitoring-evaluation mechanism, and drawing up a workplan. The training provided to local women in the use of chorkor ovens has helped them improve the quality of smoked shrimps and increase their value, expand production, improve the preservation of smoked shrimps, reduce the consumption of fuel wood, and save time. The community project has also enabled the beneficiaries to set up a partnership with *Initiative et Développement*, a local NGO undertaking micro-finance and fisheries development, with a view to diversifying their activities.

Information and Communication project for Cotonou Port fishers...

The NCU of Benin will begin an Information-Communication (I/C) project which is designed to support the existing community project and strengthen the organisational capacity of the fisheries community at the Cotonou Port. It follows the communication strategy for communities developed by the SFLP in 2001.

In their I/C activities, the community has prioritised the strengthening of interactions between organisation members, as participation at meetings had been quite low (50%), and there was insufficient information flow between the Management Committee and the other socio-professional

organisations. The project aims to promote dialogue to enable members participate more fully in decision-making. It will also empower the umbrella organisation and improve its effectiveness in the field. Another objective of the I/C activity is to facilitate strategic partnerships with administrative authorities and development partners. The project takes off in April 2003.

FAO Regional Office mission

The Beninese Fisheries Department hosted a mission by the FAO Regional Office, undertaking an exploratory visit to provide an overview, identify opportunities for collaboration between development partners, and to promote FAO field programmes in Benin. During their stay, they visited several government Ministries, regional and bilateral development partners, as well as cooperation agencies.

It was also an occasion for the Director of Fisheries to share some of his Department's concerns about the sector, such as the control of water hyacinths and to explain some other local efforts to develop apiculture in fisheries communities.

The SFLP representative at the meeting briefly presented some of the Programme's ongoing activities in Benin and provided them with concrete examples on the use of the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) in identifying, implementing and monitoring field activities. The ongoing HIV/AIDS case study in fisheries communities was discussed with representatives of the World Health Organisation (WHO), whilst the Poverty Reduction Strategy of Benin was discussed with members of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Imminent events

- The forum on participatory surveillance in Guinea is scheduled for 15 – 16 April 2003. A video documentary has been produced for presentation at the occasion, highlighting the achievements and impact of the community MCS project on the livelihoods of fishermen.
- The design mission for the Pilot Project for co-management in Coastal Artisanal Fisheries will begin its work in Mauritania at the beginning of April. The other design mission for Fisheries Post-Harvest Livelihoods will start at the end of the month.



A fishermen surveillance team on an outing (Guinea)