



INFO-FLASH

the SFLP... on the move...

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Congo - *A committed association makes waves*

The Agip Base (Pointe-Noire) umbrella organisation, set up with support from the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP), has achieved encouraging results. The organisation was created in August 2003 after 2 years of negotiation and preparation. Its objectives are to bring an end to the conflicts between the two groups (Beninese and Congolese) in the fisheries communities and to improve their livelihoods. The two groups have already succeeded in strengthening and bringing new life to their collaboration around issues of common interest, such as improving access to credit and reducing conflicts between the small-scale fishermen and industrial trawlers and off-shore oil companies, to mention but a few.

With the support of GACE, a business support group, a savings and loan structure has been set up in Pointe-Noire and loans granted to fisherfolk to build up their fisheries, livestock and vegetable gardening activities. Women fish processors have now mastered the salting/drying and smoking techniques and are earning more money than before. In addition, Agip Base now has a fuel supply point, putting an end to the problems experienced in the past.

However, there is more to come. The organisation is also lobbying to ensure that fishermen are well represented in the proposed Fisheries Consultative Committee which is to give advice on the fisheries administration's development plans. The organisation has also been able to persuade the fisheries administration to lift the ban on shark fishing enacted a year ago. The authorities thought that sharks were caught just for their fins, but the organisation was able to demonstrate that the rest of the shark was not thrown away but eaten by the people. As part of efforts to promote responsible fisheries, plans are underway to set up a participatory monitoring system for the resource.

Burkina Faso - *Pilot project work launch*

The management teams of the four countries (Burkina, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mali) involved in the first Pilot Project on the "*Improvement of the Policies and Institutions for Fisheries Co-Management in Inland Waters*" met in Ouagadougou from 6 to 8 November 2003 for a work launch organised by the Pilot Project Coordination Office. It was attended by 40 participants, including the national coordinators of the Pilot Project countries, government officials (ministries of planning and finance), FAO country representatives and the SFLP Regional Support Unit.

The workshop began with a presentation on the evolution of co-management systems for fisheries and a review of experiences in their application to pro-poor fisheries development programmes. This was followed by reports on experience of co-management in the four countries.

SFLP Info-Flash

The overriding objective of the **Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme** is to provide the 25 member countries with the most up to date information on the activities of the Programme. Info-Flash is produced by the Regional Support Unit based in Cotonou (Benin).

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Participants then considered the major issues arising for regional co-management and actions were proposed to address them. It was felt that co-management was necessary to ensure the sustainability of resources, to strengthen fisherfolk participation in local development processes and to support poverty reduction policies. More specifically, this meant managing migration by fisherfolk, strengthening user participation in resource management, setting up appropriate systems to finance and share profits within co-management and exploring livelihoods diversification options.

Benin, Congo - *HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention efforts*

The SFLP, in collaboration with the Congo and Benin National Coordination Units (NCUs), has set up an HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention project in seven coastal fishing communities: four in Benin and three in Congo. A survey on gender-related issues was begun in the target communities in the two countries towards the end of 2003. The objective was to assess the level of knowledge in the communities, and their attitudes and practices (KAP) with respect to AIDS. Taking advantage of a complementary HIV/AIDS study on livelihoods security at household level funded by the German development agency (GTZ) and conducted by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Benin, the Congo KAP study team visited Benin in November 2003 to participate in the exercise and obtain information on the methodology used to enable them to adapt and complement their own KAP study.

The Congolese delegation also visited some HIV/AIDS control projects and partners. The visits provided the delegation with a range of documentation and communication materials (video, training guides, posters, leaflets and brochures) to go back home with.

Benin - *Gender workshop*

Gender experts met in Cotonou, Benin, from 1 to 4 December 2003 to share information and exchange experience on the coping strategies of women in fishing communities. The workshop was funded by the European Commission and organised by the *Institut pour le Développement Durable des Ressources Aquatiques* (IDDRA – the institute for the sustainable development of aquatic resources), in close collaboration with SFLP. The 14 participants from government administration, fisheries research and civil society came from Benin, France, the Gambia, Niger, Nigeria, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and Tanzania. The objective was to improve understanding on how men and women interact in fishing communities, how this affects women's coping strategies, and the role gender plays in their opportunity and ability to manoeuvre for survival.

Special emphasis was paid to understanding existing opportunities for women's empowerment, and how new opportunities are negotiated and implemented in particularly vulnerable situations (war, natural disasters, pressure on fish stock, environmental degradation, etc.). Highlights of the workshop results include: (i) a framework of challenges and changes that affect the lives of small-scale fishing communities; (ii) an overview of coping strategies in response to the challenges synthesised under social, economic and institutional strategies; and (iii) a list of recommendations to assist decision-makers in the fisheries sector draw up more gender-sensitive fisheries development policies.

Central African Republic - *Working towards better visibility for fisheries*

FAO recently decided to conduct a series of studies on the agricultural sector in a number of African countries, including the Central African Republic. The work is to be implemented by a team from the African Development Bank (ADB). The aim of the exercise is to identify projects for inclusion in the framework of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Institutional capacity strengthening in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors will be one of the main issues addressed.

The Central African Republic NCU will play a major role in implementing this activity, strategic to the national recovery effort. Its tasks over the 2004-2006 period were defined in an action plan prepared with the assistance of the Regional Support Unit. The encouraging results of the SFLP community project in Mbali are to serve as a basis for developing partnership to further assist the fishing communities.

Senegal - Donors' and partners' meeting on fisheries

Senegal's Ministry of Fisheries of organised a consultative meeting with the country's fisheries stakeholders on 15 and 16 January 2004. The meeting was attended by donors, development partners, NGOs and fisheries socio-professional organisations. SFLP attended the meeting as an observer. The meeting provided an opportunity to present SFLP's activities to date, to have discussions with partners and to explore possible new partnerships.

A document prepared by the Ministry was used as a framework for the discussions. One of the main recommendations of the meeting concerned the need to coordinate and harmonise the contributions of the various partners in order to avoid duplication of effort and enhance their impact on the small-scale fisheries sector.

Yet another step forward in SFLP-IFAD collaboration

Another step has been taken in collaboration between SFLP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with the recent participation of the Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo NCUs in the design and formulation missions for two small-scale fisheries components of rural development projects to be financed by IFAD in the two countries. This brings to five the number of countries where IFAD and SFLP have worked closely together (with Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria).

New community projects

Senegal: Livelihoods diversification for the Dionewar women processors' umbrella organisation

Guinea: (i) Fisheries activities development for women processors in Doyéma and (ii) livelihoods diversification for Bongolon fishing communities

Chad: Development of fisheries and vegetable production in the Barh Kôh protected area.