



# INFO-FLASH

*the SFLP... on the move...*

Issue 37 – September/October 2004

## Congo - Pointe-Noire confronts HIV/AIDS through prostitution issues

The socio-behavioural study on prostitution conducted in Base Agip, a fishing community in the city of Pointe-Noire in Congo, as a follow up to a previous study on HIV/AIDS, has been concluded. The study involved 84 respondents made up of 32 casual and non-casual sex workers and 52 other members of the fishing community composed of 79% Congolese, 13% Beninese, 4% Ghanaians and 4% from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A feedback meeting was held in the community on 24 September and a special session for community heads and representatives of the local authorities of Pointe-Noire the day after. A drama group, locally constituted and trained, was used to communicate the results for better comprehension and response. The event was covered by the radio and television, giving even wider coverage to the results.

With regards to habits, it was noted that some of the professional sex workers receive their clients at home, while others frequent bars and hotels or move around in the Base Agip community. The reasons given by the sex workers and their clients for indulging in this risky habit range from poverty (the most vulnerable being mainly women) to alcohol consumption in times of prosperity and frustration during low or bad fishing seasons (fishermen). The use of condoms is very low and some professional sex workers even claim that their clients pay them more not to make use of condoms. Generally, the sex workers erroneously believe that antiseptic douche will protect them from sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

Based on these findings it was recommended that a team of local resource persons be trained to organise STD and HIV/AIDS prevention programmes for sex workers. These programmes will stress on the aspects of social communication, information and education (with a focus on peer education) around the most risky habits, practices and erroneous beliefs in each group. To address the issue of poverty, a microfinance organisation is to be set up in the area to directly or indirectly teach the fisherfolk how to manage their resources and develop a credit and savings culture. This, in turn, is expected to assist them diversify their livelihoods sustainably over time.

### 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 (Bénin).

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

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## Benin, The Gambia, Niger - *Action-research in gender-sensitive microfinance*

The gender study on microfinance services conducted in Niger, Benin and The Gambia has led to the formulation of three action research project proposals that are now being discussed with the National Coordination Units and the partner organisations.

Partnerships at community organisation level will test and validate gender-sensitive financing of sustainable livelihoods strategies that promote fisheries and fish marketing towards poverty reduction. The capacities of organisations will be strengthened to make them more gender-friendly and support will be provided to improve the income generated through fishing and diversified activities. This may involve the setting up of a special fund to be managed by selected microfinance institutions based on previously defined gender-sensitive policies. The marketing and supply chain and conditions for access to and control of credit services will be reviewed in consultation with community-based organisations in all three countries, the aim being to reduce existing imbalances between male and female fish workers.

Potential partnerships have been identified with microfinance institutions for (i) the preparation of well adapted and diversified credit facilities that will facilitate the purchase of fishing and processing equipment, (ii) livelihoods diversification activities, (iii) credit for peak agricultural and fishing seasons, revolving funds for cattle fattening, arts and crafts and export activities, (iv) training on market information, pricing and value chain, as well as for strengthening the fisherfolk's technical and organisational capacities. The letters of agreement are currently being drawn up. Lessons learned are expected to inform Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP).

## Cameroon, Chad - *Pilot Project activities*

Activities on the Pilot Project on post-harvest fisheries will soon commence in Cameroon and Chad based on a workplan prepared with the assistance of RSU officers. Arrangements are in high gear for the official launching of the Pilot Project on post-harvest fisheries. The National management teams have been recruited. The Cameroonian team comprises G. Toumba, a veterinarian with experience in post-harvest technology, assisted by N. Edima, a community development specialist, while that of Chad comprises M.A. Mahamat, an agronomist, assisted by M.M. Naiman, a fisheries specialist. The launching workshop is scheduled for November 2004. The teams plan to use the event to provide training in participatory monitoring and a methodology for evaluating post-harvest losses.

Efforts to explore partnership in the Pilot Project implementation have also yielded results in both countries. In Cameroon, the National Institute for Statistics has agreed to provide information on the current situation of the communities, and support to the participatory monitoring system. Its counterpart in Chad, National Institute for Statistics, Economic and Demographic studies (*Institut National des Statistiques, des Etudes Economiques et Démographiques* - INSEED) has also agreed to provide similar

support in Chad. With their rich experience in working with national projects on poverty reduction, these institutes' contributions promise to enhance the effectiveness of the participatory monitoring exercise.

Synergies have also been developed in Cameroon with the National Programme for Participatory Development (*Programme National de Développement Participatif - PNDP*) funded by the World Bank and the French Cooperation. This programme aims to strengthen rural communities' capacity in the acquisition of equipment and social infrastructures. Similarly, in Chad, synergy has been developed with a project in support of agricultural services and producers' organisations (*Projet d'Appui aux Services et aux Organisations de Producteurs - PSAOP*).

### Mali - Fisheries ministry takes shape

At a meeting organised by the NCU during a brief visit to the Fisheries Department recently, the Secretary General of the newly constituted Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Mali recently reiterated the administration's support for SFLP interventions in the fisheries communities in the country. He briefed the SFLP mission on the government's expressed interest in improving the contribution of the fisheries and fish processing sectors to wealth and job creation in Mali. It gave the mission the opportunity to be updated on the validated results of the previously concluded study on environmental threats to Lake Sélingué and surrounding areas. Two new studies on the gender profile of organisations and the contribution of fisheries to national economy respectively have also been launched.

### Gabon- Launching workshop of the Pilot Project on "Coastal Fisheries Co-management"

The workshop for the official launching of the Pilot Project on "Coastal Fisheries Co-management" in Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania took place in Libreville, Gabon from 18 to 23 October 2004.

The opening ceremony was chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Forestry Economy, Fisheries, the Environment and Nature Reserve.

The delegations from each participating country were made up of the National Coordinating Unit, Pilot project management team, the office responsible for the PRSP and representatives from FAO or UNDP (Gabon).

Apart from the delegations from each of the four countries, the launching workshop was attended by Mr. B. Horemans, the SFLP Coordinator, the majority of the experts at the RSU in Cotonou, Mr. E. Allison, a consultant in co-management and Mrs M. Donnat, a consultant for monitoring and evaluation.

The national delegations were required to present a paper on coastal management reviewing the past and current policies in connection with community participation in fishery resources management including the traditional natural resources management systems.

During the workshop, participants were also introduced to participatory monitoring as well as to communication for development.

Each country's Pilot project coordination team has now got to finalise a 3-year work plan to be submitted to the Regional Coordinator for appraisal. Based on the 5 expected outputs of the pilot project, these plans shall highlight the areas where changes can be visibly expected together with the respective indicators, the activities and fields of operation, the timetable and estimated budget. The action plans will start to be implemented at the beginning of January 2005.

**Gothenburg, Sweden - FAO received the Swedish Seafood Award for its work with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries at a ceremony in Gothenburg today.**

"We at FAO, and particularly in FAO's Fisheries Department, are deeply grateful for this recognition of the work of the Organization, particularly in relation to the implementation of the Code of Conduct," said Mr Ichiro Nomura, FAO Assistant Director-General, accepting the prize.

FAO was awarded the prize in the Sustainable Fishing category for its work on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Supporting Technical Guidelines carried out by the organization's Fisheries Department. The Code's standards promote global and regional cooperation in all sorts of national fishing industries, including small-scale fishing. It also stresses that environmentally sound and sustainable fishing can only be achieved through international effort.

The award jury stressed that FAO's work in securing food production has become increasingly important with the development of the fishing industry and with the overexploitation of fish stocks.

"The Jury wants to recognize the excellent work of FAO's Fisheries Department. There are now generally accepted norms, which were needed for better global and regional cooperation. Those norms should also be used for the management of all kind of national fisheries, including those on a small scale," the jury said.

"The Code of Conduct rests on the fundamental premise that fisheries, including aquaculture, provide a vital source of food, employment, recreation, trade and economic wellbeing for women, men and young people of both present and future generations throughout the world, and that these must therefore be conducted in a responsible manner," said Mr Nomura.

"Since its adoption by FAO Member States nearly ten years ago, the Code has served as the primary framework for FAO's fisheries work programme," he said.

The Swedish Seafood Award is organized by the trade organization Svensk Fisk (Swedish Fish), based in Gothenburg and run by the Swedish fishing industry. The organization aims at turning the general public's attention to the urgent need for all countries to increase their cooperation for better fisheries management.

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