

CONNECTING FISHERIES AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT



**THE SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMME
(SFLP) in West Africa**



MAURITANIA

MALI

NIGER

CHAD

CAPE VERDE

SENEGAL

THE GAMBIA

GUINEA BISSAU

GUINEA

BURKINA
FASO

BENIN

SIERRA LEONE

COTE
D'IVOIRE

TOGO

NIGERIA

CENTRAL
AFRICAN REP.

LIBERIA

GHANA

CAMEROON

EQ. GUINEA

SAO TOME AND
PRINCIPE

GABON

CONGO

DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC
OF CONGO

ANGOLA

SAFARI

WHAT IS THE SFLP?

The Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) is a partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (DFID) and 25 participating countries in West Africa. The SFLP aims to contribute to reducing poverty in coastal and riparian communities by improving the livelihoods of people dependent on fishery and aquatic resources. The Programme began in November 1999 and is due to finish in October 2006.

The SFLP strategy is based on four complementary approaches:

- informing and influencing institutional change and policy reform to ensure that the needs of fishing communities are communicated and represented in both fisheries and poverty-reduction policies, including national Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes;
- improving access to assets and services to enable livelihood sustainability and engagement in processes of development by fisherfolk;
- supporting institutional structures and processes to allow fisherfolk to benefit more from increasing access to urban, regional and global markets for fishery products;
- promoting strategies and tools for communication that can contribute to improvement of livelihoods in fishing communities.

The SFLP has adopted the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to poverty alleviation and works to implement the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries to sustain fishery resources. The Programme thus promotes strategies for poverty alleviation that reinforce peoples' existing capabilities, are participatory and empowering, and take into account the limitations of resource renewability.



KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH AND MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES, AS ADOPTED IN THE SFLP

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH

- Put people's livelihood systems at the centre of the development process, not just their main occupation or income-generating activity
- Be participatory in identifying development problems and their possible solutions
- Build on existing strengths in people's livelihood systems
- Recognize and respond to the diversity of livelihood strategies
- Address the multidimensional nature of poverty – income and asset poverty, marginalization and vulnerability
- Address poverty reduction strategies and policies at micro, meso and macro scales

source: based on Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets from Livelihoods Connect. www.livelihoods.org

FAO CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

- Aquatic resources, although renewable, are not infinite and need to be properly managed if their contribution to the nutritional, economic and social well-being of the growing world's population is to be sustained
- States, and all those engaged in fisheries management should, through an appropriate policy, legal and institutional framework, adopt measures for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources
- States should protect the rights of fishers and fish workers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood
- Stakeholders, including resource-users have the right to participate in fisheries management and policy development

source: 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

The SFLP is based on the understanding that the livelihoods of many people can be cross-sectoral. It further recognizes that it is important to be aware of the links between local-level livelihood issues and dynamics, meso-scale mediating institutions and processes, and macro-level trends and policies. To be effective, development interventions have to take place at all these scales. As well, they should involve both project beneficiaries (fisherfolk living in poverty) and representatives of organizations and institutions that can influence livelihoods.

Given the cross-sectoral nature of many peoples livelihoods, fishing communities are not only affected by fisheries institutions. The SFLP is also based on the understanding that fishing households are usually involved in various non-fisheries income generating activities.

The Programme's involvement in promoting fisheries co-management exemplifies the way the SFLP approaches fishery development issues across multiple levels.

Contemporary fisheries management approaches emphasize the participation of resource users themselves in decision-making processes, through co-management.



THE SFLP OPERATES AT MULTIPLE LEVELS TO EMPOWER FISHING COMMUNITIES BY ASSISTING THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT



LOCAL

Empowering fisherfolk to take a decision-making role in resource allocation and management processes may require development of capacity in both community-level organizations and in local and district government.

NATIONAL

Co-management involves transfer of rights and responsibilities from the State to resource users. It therefore requires support in national policy and legislation.

REGIONAL

Given the regional mobility of fisherfolk in West Africa and the shared nature of many resources, co-management may also require regional coordination and harmonization. Lessons learned in one country can also benefit others in the region.

GLOBAL

The development of co-management initiatives in West Africa also informs debates on fisheries management policy at global level, and may influence the work of organizations such as FAO. The SFLP experience has, for example, been influential in drafting a new set of technical guidelines* for the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

* see *Increasing the Contribution of Small-scale Fisheries to Poverty Alleviation and Food Security. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. No.10. Rome, FAO. 2005. (in press)*

THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN AFRICA

The majority of fisherfolk in Africa, whether fish catchers, processors or traders, are involved in small- and medium-scale enterprises. The large-scale or industrial sector, although a significant contributor to national revenues in some countries, is not the most important employer, nor the most important supplier of fish to regional markets.

There are an estimated 7-10 million women and men involved in Africa's fishery sector – 5.3 million of whom are in West Africa. The region includes some of the continent's major fishing nations in terms of the sector's production and role in employment, domestic consumption and exports.



Fisheries contribute to Africa's development in various ways by:

- providing part or full-time employment and income for many rural and coastal households in fishing, fish processing and trading;
- stimulating the growth of a cash-based economy. Fish are caught and sold on a daily basis; most small-scale fishing is best regarded as small enterprise, not subsistence activity;
- generating revenues for local and national government through licensing fees and various forms of taxation;
- contributing significantly to foreign currency earnings through exports and international fishing agreements;
- contributing to nutritional security for many consumers, including the poor, for whom fish is an essential component of a balanced and nutritious diet.

AFRICAN FISHERY FACTS

Total fishery landings (tonnes)	7 251 273
Total inland fishery landings (tonnes)	2 498 244
Total marine fishery landings (tonnes)	4 753 029
Number of people employed in catching sector	2 615 000
Total value of exports (US\$)	433 932 000
Total value of imports (US\$)	106 080 000
Per capita fish consumption (kilo per person per year)	7.8

Africa accounts for 24% of global inland waters capture fisheries.

Over 8% of the world's fisherfolk are African; there are more fisherfolk in Africa than in Europe, North and South America, Australasia and the Pacific put together.

Per capita consumption of fish in Africa is less than half the global average.

The intracontinental fish trade in Africa is worth US\$ 284.1 million – and it is probably underestimated.

source: *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture. FAO, Rome (2004)*

CONTRIBUTION OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR TO THE NATIONAL ECONOMY IN GHANA

A study carried out in 2005 by SFLP indicates that the fisheries sector is estimated to contribute about 5 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 12.7 percent of the agriculture GDP. It should, however, be emphasized that the value of inland fisheries has been heavily underestimated since the data reported was only for the Lake Volta.

Fishing communities along the coast derive between 40-50 percent of their income from fishing while those around Lake Volta derive between 75-85 percent.

Fish is the preferred and cheapest source of animal protein and about 75 percent of total annual production of fish is consumed locally. The per capita consumption of fish is estimated at about 25 kg per annum representing 60 percent of animal protein intake by the Ghanaian population.

Other direct fisheries contributions to the national economy are substantial. Fish and fishery products are now the country's most important non-traditional exports, accounting for over 50 percent of earnings from such exports. It also supplements the

State budget in the form of fishing licenses collected by the Directorate of Fisheries on behalf of the government. In 2002, fishing licenses contributed to 31 percent of total revenue.

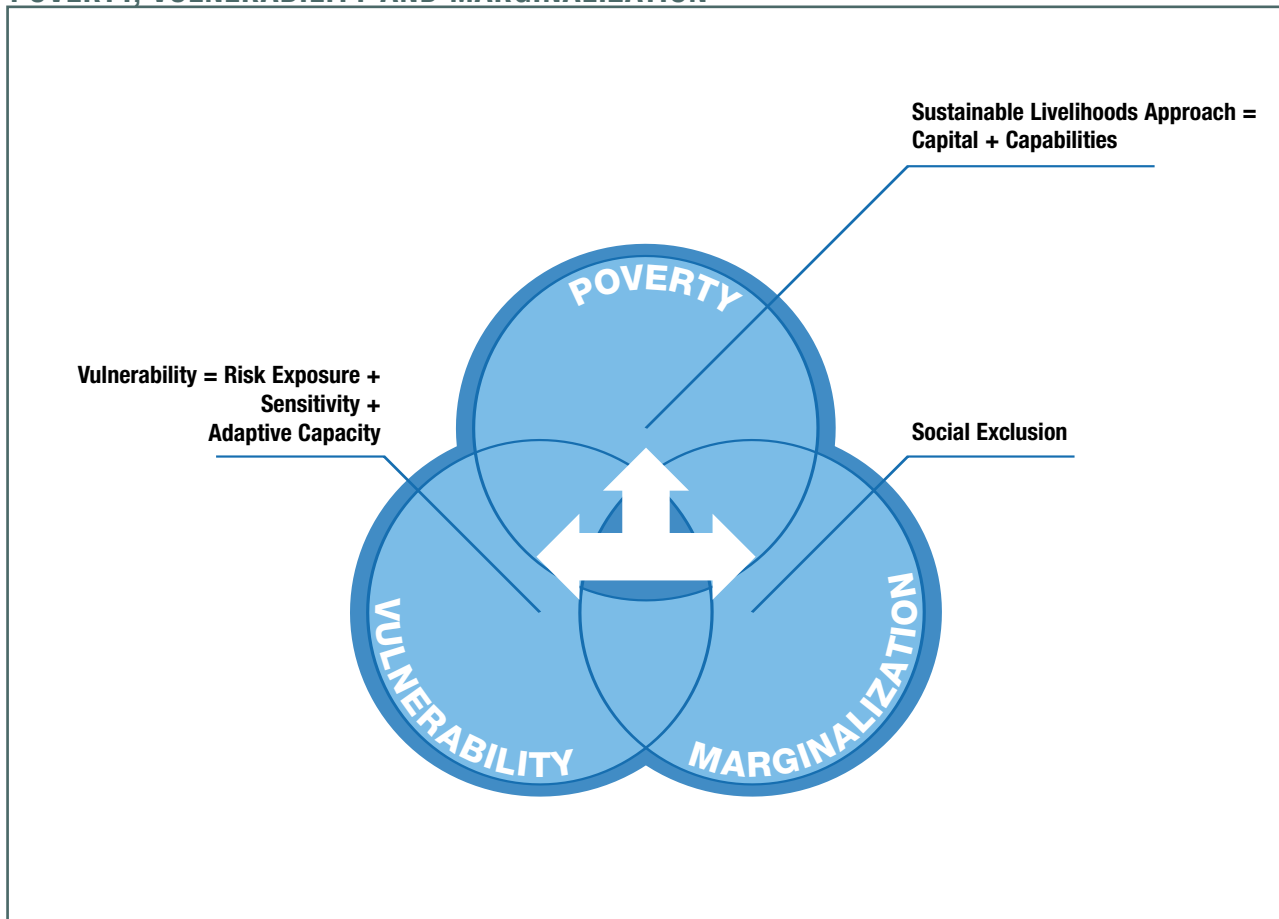
The contribution of artisanal fisheries to revenue mobilization of the Districts Assemblies shows that the revenue on fish products is less than five percent of all market tolls. Indications, however, are that this contribution could be much higher.

source: *The economic and social contribution of fisheries to national economy and rural development in Ghana, SFLP, 2005*

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN WEST AFRICA

The key challenge in fisheries development in the region is to reduce poverty, vulnerability and marginalization among people engaged in small-scale fishing while at the same time maintaining the productivity of the fishery resources. Only if both of these aims are achieved will the flow of social and economic benefits be sustained.

POVERTY, VULNERABILITY AND MARGINALIZATION



Poverty reduction programmes are guided by the UN Millennium Development Goals and Declaration of Human Rights. In Africa, strategies of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and related initiatives help direct poverty reduction and economic growth plans. In the fisheries sector, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries provides guidance. All these policy instruments address problems of poverty.

Income and asset poverty, marginalization and vulnerability are related 'states of being' in which people find themselves.

Poverty is often measured or understood in terms of capital assets and capabilities. This provides standardized measures which can be compared to targets and poverty lines, for example.

Vulnerability is understood in terms of people's exposure to risks, the sensitivity of their livelihood systems to risk and their capacity to use their assets and capabilities to adapt.

While poverty and vulnerability are sometimes thought of as the 'end results' of various policy failures, marginalization is conceived as resulting from negative social and power relations with others - the marginalized are excluded. These concepts overlap and their causes are not simply one-way. For example, people can become economically and politically marginalized because they are poor, or they can become impoverished because they are marginalized.

Although related, the concepts suggest different entry points for development. In the past, most fishery development programmes tried to address income and asset poverty directly, by providing improved fishing technology and services.

The SFLP places greater emphasis on addressing all forms of poverty in the design of its intervention strategy. In this respect plans promoting involvement of women and marginalized groups in management decision-making processes mainly deal with marginalization or social exclusion, while those aimed at reducing incidence of HIV in fishing communities mainly tackle vulnerability.



A series of participatory studies on poverty among fishing communities, undertaken by SFLP, revealed the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and its complex causes.

Findings include:

The income status of fisherfolk can be highly variable within communities. Boat and gear owners and larger-scale traders can be among the wealthier members of their communities. Working as a crew member on a fishing boat or processing fish for sale can provide better financial returns than other wage-labour options. But the incomes are often uncertain, seasonal and, where fisheries resources are in decline, incomes are also declining.

Many poverty surveys use indices of asset status as a measure of poverty and usually include ownership of land and livestock and type of house lived in as proxy wealth indicators. The asset status of fisherfolk is not easily comparable to those of farmers because mobile fisherfolk may be quite wealthy but not own land and livestock (at least in the place they are fishing). Most national poverty surveys do not, therefore, capture the relevant dimensions of fisherfolk's poverty and are potentially misleading.

Fisherfolk are often excluded from access to other employment opportunities, social services such as health and education, equitable access to land and may have weak political representation. These factors lead to the marginalization of fisherfolk in development processes which, in turn, undermines their contribution to the local and national economy.

Marginalization, insecure rights of access to resources and dependence on uncertain production systems, as well as the risky nature of many fishing operations, makes fisherfolk vulnerable. They are exposed to risk, their livelihood systems are sensitive to those risks, and their marginalization makes it difficult to adapt to the impacts of 'shocks' and adverse trends in the natural environment, the economy or to policy and governance failures. High vulnerability potentially reduces fisherfolk's incentives to save and invest in the future.

The dimensions of poverty in fishing communities are therefore complex. Often the causes of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion or marginalization lie outside the fishery sector or are not exclusive to it. Poverty alleviation in fishing-dependent communities frequently requires fishery management and development interests to seek solutions to problems outside the sector. This calls for new thinking and new partnerships in fisheries development.

EXAMPLES OF THE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY, VULNERABILITY AND MARGINALIZATION IN WEST AFRICAN INLAND FISHERIES



On Lake Volta, Ghana, fishing communities have poor access to services because the region communication is isolated from markets and routes. Fisherfolk are also geographically mobile and fishing communities are often of recent origin (the lake was created by damming the Volta River in the mid-1960s). This means that both access to social services and communities' own social organizations are absent or weak.

On the shores of Lake Kossou, Côte d'Ivoire, fisherfolk's livelihood sustainability

is compromised by ethnically-based clashes between fishers and farmers and by a broader economic and political crisis in the country that threatens personal and asset security.

On Lake Selingue, Mali, declining catches and indebtedness of fisherfolk to fish traders to whom they sell threaten livelihood security, as does the low level of land ownership among the fishing people. This leaves them highly dependent on the state of the fish stocks for income and livelihood security throughout the year.

SFLP ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Although SFLP is a complex Programme with multiple pathways to achieving its impact, it has successfully met its main objectives, as illustrated by some examples below, under four thematic areas.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND POLICY REFORM

Fisheries and Poverty Reduction Policies

An analysis of the level of integration of the fisheries sector into the PRSP process was carried out in 2002 in the 25 SFLP participating countries. It showed that although 17 countries had been drawing up an interim PRSP, only 6 had reached the stage of the final PRSP (Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal). However, the fisheries sector was not very visible in any of these. Since then SFLP has developed priority actions to foster better integration of fisheries into existing PRSPs. Moreover, in 2005, the fisheries sector is integrated in 5 more countries' final PRSP (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Niger). It is also encouraging to note that where fisheries policy reform is underway, there is evidence

that poverty reduction is now even a policy goal for the fisheries sector.

Sustaining co-management

SFLP has piloted fisheries management based on partnerships between local and national government and fishery sector organizations and other interest groups. Co-management pilot projects are underway in eight countries. They are supported by wider institutional reform to provide a policy environment conducive to sustaining co-management arrangements beyond the life of these projects. Results of these management experiments include the development of sustainable means of financing stakeholder involvement. In Ghana, e.g. the level and use of taxation of fisheries activities are negotiated between the fishing communities, the local government and the fisheries administration.

DEFENDING RIGHTS AND REDUCING VULNERABILITY: ARTISANAL FISHERMEN ON PATROL IN GUINEA

Since 2000, SFLP has supported Guinea's fishermen in the monitoring, control and surveillance of the areas reserved for artisanal fishing. The project includes training as well as supplying equipment so that artisanal fishermen can rapidly communicate information on the illegal boats they come across to the surveillance headquarters.

As a result of this project, between 2000 and 2002, observed incursions by industrial (often foreign) fishing vessels in the artisanal zone fell from 450 to 81; the number of disputes at sea dropped from 240 to 35; the number of accidents (collisions between industrial vessels and pirogues, etc.) were down from 200 to 15 and the number of deaths resulting from these accidents down from 12 to 0!



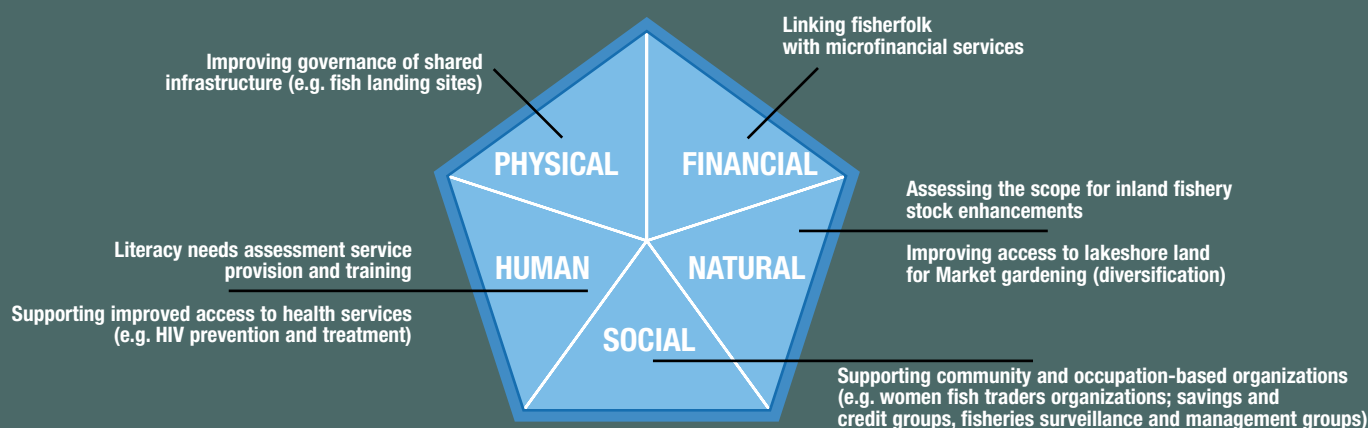
BUILDING ASSETS TO STRENGTHEN FISHERIES-BASED LIVELIHOODS

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach emphasizes building strong and stable asset platforms to sustain livelihood systems. Although the focus of the SFLP has been on building human and social capital, some activities have also had beneficial impacts on the other three types of capital asset. Rather than trying to build these directly, the Programme has concentrated on policy and institutional mechanisms that improve people's equitable access to

assets. In this way, the SFLP has assisted fisherfolk in obtaining the services they need to strengthen their asset base in ways that they choose themselves.

For example, the SFLP supported micro-finance organizations to develop pro-poor and gender sensitive policies and products adapted to the needs of the fisheries sector. At the same time, the Programme assisted the development of strategic partnerships with organizations addressing social exclusion, enterprise development and responsible management of the fisheries resource and access to fish processing infrastructure.

CAPITAL ASSET TYPES AND EXAMPLES OF SFLP INTERVENTIONS TO HELP POORER HOUSEHOLDS IMPROVE THEIR ACCESS TO ASSETS IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THEIR LIVELIHOOD SYSTEMS





INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MARKETS AND PRODUCTION IN THE FISHERY SECTOR

The Programme has tested and developed a methodology to analyze the value chain of small-scale fisheries products in Cameroon. The test was conducted by a team of consultants with the support of the Cameroonian Ministry of livestock, fisheries and animal industries and the SFLP Pilot Project on livelihoods improvement in the post-harvest sector.

The analysis helped understanding the interactions between the different actors in the post-harvest sector. Problems linked to fish products preservation and socio-cultural practices that influence the value chain were also addressed. At the end of the test, pilot activities were identified with a view to increasing the income of stakeholders. The methodology is being used to analyze the value chain of small-scale fisheries products in other countries covered by the Pilot Project on post-harvest livelihoods (i.e. Chad, the Gambia and Senegal).

In the framework of this Pilot Project, the SFLP is also undertaking a qualitative and quantitative post-harvest fish loss assessment in view to reduce them and increase the contribution of the sector to livelihoods and food security.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN FISHERIES

Access of fishing communities to appropriate information and modern communication networks is an important component of improved livelihoods. This is particularly well demonstrated by the development of radio stations in the region.

Six FM radio stations broadcast to communities along Lakes Bagré and Sélingué in Burkina Faso and Mali respectively. Four of these are commercial radio stations, one is a confessional radio, while the last is a community radio. In Ghana, three FM radio stations cover the districts south of Lake Volta. All three are community radios and some are affiliated to the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC).

The SFLP discussed with the heads of the radio stations and some of their audience to understand how these stations could serve the fishing communities better, and most especially, how they can back up the implementation of the co-management plans in Lakes Bagré, Sélingué and Volta. To this end, small projects are being implemented by the Programme to make local FM radio stations more useful to fishing communities by encouraging them to address appropriate topics in their programmes, and also to grant some airtime to the fisherfolk themselves. This would enable communities to discuss themes directly linked to fisheries (the current situation of a resource, banned fishing gears, responsible fisheries, co-management of resources, etc.). Other priority themes such as poverty reduction, local development and social issues associated with education, health and gender could also be addressed by community radio stations.

BUILDING ON SFLP STRENGTHS

Issues and strategies for future action in the West African small-scale fisheries sector



The SFLP has demonstrated that it is possible to strengthen both resource management systems and the livelihood systems of fisherfolk.

The Programme has identified new directions in fisheries development and has assisted government fishery departments, fisherfolk themselves and civil society to forge new partnerships to address development problems that are outside the direct control of the sector.

The SFLP has shown how these interventions and partnerships can work and how they can contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals for poverty reduction and targets for responsible fisheries.

While much has been achieved, there are new challenges to be faced.

Fisheries development in the region needs to optimize the contribution that the fishery sector makes to economic growth at local, national and regional levels, and to food and livelihood security.

The SFLP has opened up new areas for commitment in policy and practice in the service of fisheries development. Fishing communities and local and national governments will require support to implement initiatives begun by SFLP partners and to respond to newly-identified issues.

Areas in need of further assistance include:

- **Governance** Effective integration of small-scale fishing interests within systems of regional and global fisheries management
- **Rights** Ensuring small-scale fisherfolk benefit from compliance with government commitments to human rights, including in areas such as gender, working conditions and migration
- **Standards** Assisting small-scale fisheries to comply with international trade laws and product quality standards, to ensure they benefit from increasing integration with global markets
- **Multiple-use** Strengthening rights of small-scale fisheries in the context of intrasectoral (reducing conflict or competition with the industrial fishing sector) and intersectoral issues (protecting fishing interests in the context of multiple uses of the coastal zone and of water resources)
- **Decentralization** Ensuring decentralized governance systems work in the interests of the fishing sector and that the sector makes a beneficial contribution to local economies
- **Public-private partnerships** Achieving development of the small-scale fisheries sector through promotion of public-private partnerships
- **Communication** Improving capacity for handling important cross-sectoral issues to ensure small-scale fisheries contribute positively to Africa's development (e.g. improving access to social, political and judicial services, strengthening regional communication systems, establishing regional information platforms)

EXPANDING ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

The existing structure of the SFLP is ideally suited to respond to additional challenges

- The institutional anchorage within FAO headquarters in Rome enables contributions and responses to global policy agendas and provides access to unrivalled technical expertise both within FAO itself and through its global network of collaborators
- The existing regional technical support unit, based in Cotonou, Benin, helps foster emerging areas of skill and knowledge and supports policy harmonization. It also provides a regional data bank and policy research facility.
- National coordination units work within existing government structures and are able to ensure that issues of national significance are highlighted and addressed in regional programmes.
- Finally, the SFLP has built the capacity of a range of development actors to work directly, or through local government, with fisherfolk's organizations at both national and local level and with community-based organizations and donor and NGO field programmes, many of whom had not previously worked in the fisheries sector. These networks of development actors provide an efficient means of linking emerging global policy agendas with local realities. are in an ideal position to provide the responsive policy action and development interventions that are required to support Africa's future growth and development.



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Visit the SFLP Web site (in English, French and Portuguese) at www.sflp.org

Consult the SFLP Bulletins (available online via the Web site or by request to the Programme Coordination Unit)

Read Neiland, A.E. and Béné, C (eds.). 2004. Poverty and Small-scale Fisheries in West Africa. FAO, Rome and Kluwer, the Netherlands

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