

SECTION 1

THE MAIN REPORT

Report on the Seventh Liaison Officers' Meeting

Item 1. Opening session

1. The Seventh Liaison Officers' Meeting of the "Programme for Integrated Development of Artisanal Fisheries in West Africa" was held in conjunction with the "Workshop on Conflicts in Coastal Fisheries in West Africa" at Palm Beach Hotel, Cotonou at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Benin from 22 to 26 November 1993.
2. Mr. G. Mensah, Director of Fisheries of Benin welcomed Mr. Mama A. N'Diaye, Minister of Rural Development and the IDAF Liaison Officers and requested Mr. Gana Diagne, FAO Representative for Benin to address the participants.
3. On behalf of the Director General of the FAO, Dr. E. Saouma and the Assistant Director General a.i. Dr. W. Krone, Mr. G. Diagne thanked the Government of Benin for hosting the headquarters of IDAF and the session. Mr. G. Diagne stressed the importance of artisanal fisheries in the region as a major source of animal protein for human nutrition and emphasised the need for regional collaboration. He thanked the Government of Denmark for making available the funds. Mr. G. Diagne emphasized the importance of applying an integrated strategy to develop the artisanal fisheries sector in the region.
4. The Seventh Liaison Officers Meeting was declared open by Mr. M.A. N'Diaye, Minister of Rural Development of the Republic of Benin who reiterated the important role of artisanal fisheries in the West African region and emphasized the need to monitor the sector and assist in establishing measures to minimize conflicts as the fishery resources are basically shared stocks. The Minister also extended thanks to DANIDA, the donor of the IDAF Programme.
5. The Seventh Liaison Officers' Meeting held from the 22-24 November 1993 was attended by Liaison Officers from 19 of the 20 IDAF member countries. Angola was unable to attend the meeting. The list of participants is given in Annex 1. A larger forum participated in the "Workshop on Conflicts in Coastal Fisheries in West Africa".

Item 2. Adoption of the Agenda

6. Mr. G. Mensah, Director of Fisheries, Benin was unanimously elected as chairman of the meeting with Ms. M. Bondja, Cameroon and Mr. M. N'jie, The Gambia as rapporteurs.
7. The Agenda which appears in Annex 2 was adopted. The list of documents submitted to the session is given in Annex 3 and the documents are attached in Annex 4.
8. The IDAF team served as Secretariat for the meeting.

Item 3. Report on the Sixth Liaison Officers Meeting

9. The report was introduced and the meeting asked for comments. Liaison Officers expressed satisfaction on the action taken on the recommendations made during the Sixth Liaison Officers Meeting. In particular the improvements in layout and editing of the IDAF Newsletter were appreciated. However, IDAF should properly acknowledge authorship of contributions to the Newsletter.
10. The participants emphasized the importance of the IDAF-fellow scheme and study tours which enhance the participants capacity to implement activities in their home countries. The improved reporting from IDAF-fellows and study tours was acknowledged and it was **recommended** that reports should be distributed to the hosts and the Liaisons Officers.

Item 4. Progress Report January-November 1993

11. The Progress Report was presented and the assistance provided by the Programme was acknowledged. Several countries expressed a need for a more active intervention from IDAF in order that more countries benefit appreciably from the Programme. The Secretariat reiterated the important role of the Liaison Officers in this respect and requested them to draw the attention of their authorities to the capabilities and limitations of the Programme so that IDAF can better collaborate with their respective governments in assisting to solve problems in the artisanal fishery sector.
12. Mauritania and Congo felt neglected by the Programme as no or few IDAF activities had taken place in their countries. The Programme reiterated that IDAF works in countries on their request, to ensure proper collaboration with a sustainable impact. The Programme advised the participants to review the criteria for which IDAF undertakes activities in associated countries. The more concrete discussion was postponed for Item 7, the workplan for 1994.
13. It was regretted that a scheduled seminar for the northern sub-region on "Safety at Sea" had been postponed. In response the Secretariat stated, that more information and better understanding of the character of accidents at sea had to be collected and analysed through ongoing activities before organizing the seminar.
14. The participants appreciated the effort made by the Programme in the field of human resource development and stressed that emphasis should be placed on training, particularly in statistics and data collection. The Secretariat replied that each activity undertaken by the Programme has a strong component of on-the-job training, which in many cases include information and data collection.

15. Participants unanimously confirmed the usefulness of Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) as a tool to sensitize and empower people in the fishing communities by improving their skills in decision making. The Liaison Officers endorsed the proposition to organize sensitization workshop for decision makers on PRA. The participants **recommended** that IDAF places priority on this method and continues promoting the PRA-method through training at a wider scale to the benefit of a larger number of countries.
16. IDAF covers a vast area and cannot at any one time work in each member country. The meeting **recommended** IDAF to continue improving the preparation and accelerate the diffusion of IDAF documentation in order that all countries in the region benefit from available experience.

Item 5. The IDAF approach to the Integrated Development of Small-Scale Fisheries in West Africa - Lessons Learned

17. The lessons learned during the application of the integrated approach for development of the small-scale fisheries were presented and thanks were extended to the IDAF-fellows who provided the baseline studies for the synthesis of the lessons learned.
18. The Liaison Officers stressed the usefulness and importance of applying the integrated approach for development of the small-scale fisheries sector. Liaison Officers noted that in situations where infrastructure and public services are inadequate and on condition that the fishery resource base is strong, the development of horizontal activities is essential to the successful development of the fishery.
19. Participants reiterated the continuing validity of the approach and emphasised that the concept was flexible. There is a need to balance the degree of vertical and horizontal integrated activities according to the specific situation.
20. The participants underlined the importance of having qualified and motivated staff to successfully implement the integrated approach.

Item 6. Main thrusts of IDAF phase III

21. The Secretariat presented a synthesis of the IDAF Programme phase III. The Project Document for the third phase was prepared in close cooperation with three sub-regional representatives, nominated by the Sixth Liaison Officers Meeting in Banjul in February 1993. The main thrusts of the phase III are based on the recommendations of the evaluation mission held in October 1992 and the recommendations provided by the Sixth Liaison Officers Meeting. During the proposed IDAF phase III emphasis will be placed on strengthening of human resources and institutional capacities in the countries covered by IDAF at both local and national level. These elements are essential for sustainable development of the fisheries sector.

22. The Liaison Officers endorsed the project document for a possible IDAF phase III and expressed the wish that DANIDA should fund this follow-up phase.
23. Sao Tome & Principe questioned why environmental issues do not constitute a separate objective in the IDAF phase III. The Secretariat replied that environmental issues are already an implicit part of the objective dealing with fishery resource management in which emphasis is placed on responsible fishing and the sustainability of activities undertaken in the sector.

Item 7. Work Programme for 1994

24. The Secretariat presented an overview of the working methodology for the preparation of annual workplans, the workplan for 1994 and the procedure through which the plan would be implemented.
25. Participants endorsed both the methodology for elaborating annual workplans and the procedure for implementing the workplan for 1994. They however called on the IDAF Programme to ensure that no country in the region is marginalized or neglected by the Programme. The Programme should avoid duplication of effort with other regional programmes such as the Programme for utilization of artisanal fishery products financed by EC and executed by a Consortium of NGOs in the ECOWAS region.
26. Participants sought clarification on the planned training course on fish quality assurance for Portuguese speaking countries. The Secretariat informed the meeting that the training course is being organized jointly by IDAF and FAO headquarters based project also financed by DANIDA. The headquarters based project aims at improving fishery product quality and continued access of high value species to export markets. Training manuals on the subject in Portuguese are now available. Mozambique although not within the IDAF region would be invited to the training workshop on quality assurance.
27. Nigeria and Mauritania requested to be included in the quality assurance training programme. Mauritania also requested assistance in fish and fishing technology.
28. Participants noted that the Liaison Officers' Meeting is a very important forum for informal exchange of information between countries in the region.
29. Liaison officers requested that NGOs be included in training activities organized by IDAF. The Secretariat noted that this was a good idea, but stressed that this may not always be possible because of budget limitations. It was suggested that alternate funding be sought for such activities.
30. A good number of Liaison officers expressed their preoccupation with safety at sea problems. The meeting was informed that in recognition of the importance of safety at sea, the subject was the major theme of IDAF Newsletter N° 19, September 1993. IDAF is also pursuing a northern zone safety at sea project with potential donors.

31. Participants expressed their disappointment that DANIDA was unable to send an observer to the meeting. They felt that this deprived them of the opportunity of direct interaction with IDAF's donor agency.
32. Liaison officers **recommended** that FAO continue its efforts to convince DANIDA or other donors of the importance which the member countries attach to those essential programme activities which have had to be removed or seriously reduced for reasons of financial stringency.
33. Participants expressed appreciation for efforts made by IDAF to encourage the use of experts from the region in its work, and for contacts already made with research institutions, other projects and NGOs. Liaison officers **recommended** that these endeavours be pursued.

Item 8. The present status of artisanal fisheries in the region

34. Mr. F. A. Camara, the National Director of the Kaback Project in Guinea, presented the pilot project for integrated development of the artisanal fisheries in Kaback. Significance was given to the credit scheme which is a formal system managed by the project itself. The Village Development Committee agreed upon collecting an extra charge of 10% on outboard engines and fishing gears in order to generate funds for executing micro-projects.
35. Mr. L.I. Braimah, the National Director of the Yeji project in Ghana, gave a presentation on the activities of the project laying emphasis on the sustainability of activities undertaken in the Yeji fishing community. The planned Community Fishery Centre which has not yet been constructed will be managed according to private enterprise principles.
36. Messrs. Tussaint Adegbite and Marcel Baglo described the GTZ funded project for the promotion of lagoon fisheries in Benin which has a strong component of sustainable exploitation of mangroves.
37. Dr. G. Toumba, Lagdo Fisheries Division, Benoue North-East project in Cameroon, presented elements and mechanisms which ensure the sustainability of project activities.
38. Discussions on these four presentations were at a high technical level and participants indicated the usefulness of such an exercise and stressed that it should be repeated in subsequent meetings.
39. IDAF's Community Development Expert made a presentation on the relationship between population pressure and fisheries development. Participants were encouraged to take note of population growth and related issues in the development of artisanal fisheries in their respective countries.

40. IDAF Fishing Technologist presented a price list on fishing gears and equipment. The contribution of Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea as well as IDAF associated projects in Yeji and Kamsar was acknowledged. Due to the fact that the prices of fishing gear are already outdated at the time they are published, it was agreed that this activity will be suspended.
41. IDAF Senior Planning and Extension Officer in the Conakry Antenna informed participants on developments that have taken place in the Landing Site User Group Committees since the Sixth Liaison Officers Meeting. A committee has been formed to coordinate activities undertaken at the various landing sites.

Item 9. Other Matters

42. Liaison Officers vividly expressed appreciation to the financing agency DANIDA for its continuing interest in the project.
43. The Government of the Republic of Benin was thanked for its hospitality.

Item 10. Adoption of the Report

44. The Liaison Officers adopted the present report and asked the Secretariat to ensure its finalization and proceed with its distribution:

Item 11. Closure of the Meeting

45. IDAF Seventh Liaison Officers Meeting was declared closed by Mr. G. Mensah, Director of Fisheries of the Republic of Benin.