



COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE POWER TO THE FISHERS YEAR 3 LEARNING WORKSHOP

Introduction

The Power to the Fishers (PTF) project held a learning workshop on Thursday, the 9th of June 2022, at the Mensvic Grand Hotel in Accra. The workshop provided an avenue for discussions on topical fishery issues and the dissemination of key lessons on current fisheries trends. The workshop brought together fishery regulators (the Fisheries Commission and the National Premix Fuel Secretariat), selected civil society groups, fisher associations, and other key persons with a niche in fishery resource management.

As part of the agenda, there was a panel discussion on the topic, '**Demystifying Premix Fuel Access: Finding 21st Century Solutions to Premix Fuel Delivery**'.

The highlights of deliberations are outlined below:

Concerns Raised by Participants

Based on individual experiences and current happenings, the following issues were raised by participants:

- The non-enforcement of **L.I. 2233** (the main document stipulating the mandate of the National Premix Fuel Secretariat (NPFS)) has led to chief fishers being consistently denied their mandates as chairpersons of the landing beach committees (LBC). Also, the participation of other sections of fisherfolk on the LBCs has been hijacked by political operatives (from the ruling political party).
- Biases (mainly along party lines) have led to the inaccessibility of premix fuel by some fisherfolk. Additionally, the hoarding and sale of premix fuel to non-fisherfolk are endemic at various landing beaches, and these have been identified as the main accelerating factors of premix fuel shortages.
- Lax measures (including ineffective monitoring) and greed (intent to exploit the subsidy) are other contributing factors to difficulty in premix fuel delivery. In exploiting the subsidy, actors along the value chain engage in premix fuel diversion, hoarding, and sale at unapproved prices. Some premix tanker drivers, fisherfolk, and affiliates of the incumbent government have been identified as culprits of these infractions.
- The strong tidal waves of some beaches compel fisherfolk to land catch and dock vessels at other landing sites. Due to the inability to dock at tidal shores, these beaches are rated less active (by the FC and NPFS) and allocated minimal quantities of premix fuel. On the other hand, by virtue of fisherfolk docking their canoes at

adopted beaches, the beaches are considered busy and allocated high volumes of premix. However, these fishers, who receive close-to-no premix at their home beaches, are denied premix at their adopted beaches since they (fishers) are regarded as outsiders.

Comments by the National Premix Fuel Secretariat

The NPFS' responses to some issues mentioned by participants are captured below:

- In curbing the challenges faced in premix fuel administration, the Government of Ghana (GoG) is making efforts to ensure uninterrupted supply. These include premix supply automation and the electronic canoe identification card.
- Processes have been initiated to digitize the supply and distribution of the premix fuel as a measure to stave off incidents of diversion and hoarding. In view of this, the Fisheries Commission (FC) plans to undertake a canoe frame survey which will enable the NPFS to update its database on all operating artisanal vessels in the country. Currently, approximately 70% of all canoes in Ghana have been registered and thus, have the canoe identification number.
- Shortages in premix fuel have been widely reported and this is an attribution of the indiscriminately increasing number of canoes rather than the purported hoarding and diversion of the fuel. Additionally, the versatility (in its usage) of the fuel further makes its monitoring and administration an arduous task, as increased demand for the fuel has resulted in inequitable access.
- The number of motorized canoes and the extent of fishing effort at the landing beaches are the primary determinants of the frequency of fuel supplied by the secretariat — the busier the landing site, the greater the amount of fuel supplied.
- The structure and composition of the LBCs is instructed by law in the LI 2233. Any violation to this provision should be enough basis for fishers to file a court case and test the law.

Recommendations

Participants and sector stakeholders proffered key insights that will enable equitable premix distribution. The recommendations are tabled below:

- The LI 2233 has been in operation for some time now and there have been lessons learned from its execution. Lessons learnt — inclusive of initiatives such as the electronic canoe identification card (CIC) — need to be incorporated into the legislative instrument. The NPFS should review components of the LI 2233 and provide signals on elements that need to be amended.
- There is the need to also revise the parent act, ACT 625, since it did not envisage the present issues in premix delivery. With needed amendments made to ACT 625, the act will then generate insights to addressing pertinent issues.

- Control of the LBCs should be handed back to the fisherfolk, and involvement of political operatives should be eliminated. The NPFS, prior to inaugurating the LBCs, should engage the various sections of fisherfolk — canoe owners and fishmongers — to confirm that these sections are appropriately represented on the LBC. In accordance with LI 2233, members of the LBC, with the exception of the representative of the district assembly, should be fisherfolk.
- The allocation of premix fuel to less active landing beaches must be closely monitored to hamper diversion. Needed controls should be in place to prevent non-tracked tankers from conveying premix fuel.
- Members of the LBCs must be adequately trained on good records keeping to enhance accountability and easy retrieval of information on quantities received.
- Issues of politicization and hoarding at the various landing beaches must be probed, with punitive measures administered to serve as a deterrent to potential perpetrators.
- NPFS needs to revise its methodology in allocating premix specifically to beaches with strong tidal waves. Aside literature and observational evidence, NPFS should seek conversational evidence from such landing beaches — as part of a triangulation process. This will enable the said beaches access adequate premix volumes due them.

Conclusion

CERATH Development Organisation hereby expresses appreciation to persons and institutions that contributed to the success of the workshop.

Power to the Fishers project is being implemented with funds from the European Union (EU). The comments expressed here are a compilation of deliberations shared by key sector stakeholders during the PTF year three learning workshop and are **not** indicative of a statement of policy by the EU.

SIGNED

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