

---

**FROM AFRICA/Ghana****Exchanging experiences****by David Eli of TESCOOD, Ghana**

---

In an exchange programme in December 1998, 13 women fishworkers from eight fishery co-operative societies in Benin visited Ghana. The exchange was facilitated by ID Pêche, Benin and TESCOOD, Ghana. Both ID Pêche and TESCOOD are NGOs working with artisanal fishing communities in Benin and Ghana respectively.

The main objective of the exchange was to enable women fish processors from Benin to learn more about the various fish processing techniques of their Ghanaian counterparts and to discuss other matters of mutual interest.

Among the places visited by the group was the Tema Fishing Harbour. Here they were able to observe the different levels of the fishery in operation — the artisanal, the semi-industrial and the industrial. They saw the operations of fresh-fish vendors, both at the wholesale and retail levels. The retailing activities of the vendors of imported frozen fish was another area they observed. What was amazing to them was the fact that it was primarily women who controlled fish marketing at the harbour. They saw the big cold rooms and the workers (mostly men) being managed by these women. In the fishing village of Prampram, where TESCOOD had organized a *durbar* (meeting) of fishworkers for the celebration of the World Fisheries Day, they interacted with women representatives from 13 fishing communities.

Later the women of Prampram, Lekpongunor and Ningo joined hands to take their Beninese counterparts through the construction of the Chorkor Smoker. They were also taken through some rudiments of fish-tray construction. It was interesting to see these women handling carpentry tools to construct the trays. In Tsokomey, a fishing village some 30km west of Accra, the women met with members of local women's associations. They discussed issues relating to credit, organizational strategies and technical inputs. The issue of fish marketing came up strongly.

The women identified high tariffs and the intimidating attitudes of custom officials as the major hin

drances to cross-border fish trade, and stressed the need to resolve these problems. They sought the assistance of both TESCOOD and ID Pêche on the matter.