



Justice Salimatu Koroma
Sierra Leone Law Reform Commission
Chairperson

EU Export Market Certification of Sierra Leone Fishery and Marine Products

Dear Readers,

For the past few decades Sierra Leone has faced tremendous challenges in its quest to gain access to the International Markets for its fishery and agricultural produce. Like other developing countries, it seeks to diversify its economy and improve competitiveness on the International market in order to generate much needed foreign exchange and enhance its economy which will lead to overall poverty reduction.

A major impediment has however been Sierra Leone's failure to put in place a significant legal and institutional framework which will ensure full compliance with International food quality and safety standards.

Since 2014 the Law Reform Commission has had the opportunity to work with Précon Food Management and other partners within and outside Sierra Leone to develop a Food Safety law which will be in full compliance with International Standards and at the same time enhance the institutional framework for the implementation of the Regulations.

Overall food safety is a critical component for sustainable development. A good food safety regime which includes good laws and regulations with robust inspection, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms and well trained professionals capable of operating good laboratory services are some of the important ingredients which will result in certification in the European Union and other International markets for our produce, most importantly fishery products.

As the International Community moves towards Post Millennium Development Goal Phase on sustainable development goals, food safety is an essential element in improving global health and ensuring sustainable economic development. With the strides being made in this area, Sierra Leone will soon be able to obtain much needed certification from the international markets.

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The Global Seafood Expo in Brussels 2015

The Seafood processing global expo in Brussels is the largest and most attended trade event of its kind held annually. It is a platform which attracts buyers and suppliers of seafood related services worldwide. A delegation of eight persons from Sierra Leone was part of the visit to Seafood Expo held in Belgium, Brussels from the 21st – 23rd April 2015. The purpose of this visit was to identify market opportunities in the EU for Sierra Leone Fish and Fisheries products as it is a subproject of the EU certification project undertaken by Précon. The visit was done at a time when Sierra Leone was putting an end to the Ebola virus outbreak and also getting ready for the EU export license for its fish and fisheries products by the end of the year. It was also an opportunity to explore export potentials and network with other industry professionals from all over the world. The country can therefore benefit greatly by presenting itself as a fisheries investment destination at this Global seafood marketplace. All participants appraised the visit as very valuable and SLIEPA is active to prepare Sierra Leone for participation in the next Expo that will take place in 2016.

Events and project milestones

1. Ebola sensitization materials which included Veronica buckets, waste water bucket, Medicated Soaps and Ebola sensitization fliers were distributed to the various fish landing sites around Freetown and District medical headquarters nationwide in October 2014.
2. Drafting of the Food Safety Law of Sierra Leone started in the fall of 2014. The Law Reform Commission has been actively engaged to prepare this bill to be submitted to parliament.
3. Fish Samples (40kg) were sent to Europe in February 2015 to be tested in a laboratory in Rotterdam to validate the new national fish monitoring plan. Unfortunately, this fish was destroyed by the EU border control as Sierra Leone was yet to satisfy the IUU procedures. The IUU formalities have been submitted to Europe in April 2015.
4. Hon. Ibrahim R. Bundu – Majority Leader, SL House of Parliament, Hon. Helen Kuyembeh, representing SL Parliament, Hon. Babatunde Lewally, representing SL Parliament, and Ambassador Ibrahim Sorie, Ambassador to the EU in Brussels, paid a courtesy call to Précon's head office in Bunnik, Holland, where a presentation on the EU Certification project was made by Jan Moggre.
5. A Delegation from Sierra Leone was invited by Précon in April to the 2015 Brussels seafood Expo. The team was headed by Professor Strasser-King. The Sierra Leone Ambassador to the EU in Brussels, Ambassador Ibrahim Sorie joined the team visiting the Expo. A Dock facility for fishing trawlers, a Fisheries Vocational school and an electronic fish auction in Urk in the Netherlands were also visited.
6. Arrival of Précon team members in first week of May 2015: Inge Teninglo started work on Hygiene guide implementation and Thomas van Schie on Fish sampling, while also working on the hygiene guides.
7. Arrival of Ronald van den Heuvel in the second week of May 2015 to continue work on the project and present Progress report on the project since the Ebola outbreak.
8. Working visit of Mr. Jan Moggre' CEO of Précon Food Management in the months of January and May 2015.



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Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotional Agency (SLIEPA)

Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA) was established by the investment and export promotion Act of 2007 to promote investment opportunities in Sierra Leone and facilitate the export of Sierra Leone Products. The corporate mission of SLIEPA is to provide personalized and high value added services and information to investors and exporters aiming at diversifying and increasing exports and their value addition and further develop proven investment opportunities while maximizing their impact in the local economy. The Agency also functions towards facilitating registration of business enterprises and assisting investors in obtaining permits, licenses, certificates or clearances needed for the commencement of business; SLIEPA provides a quick response service to all investment and export related enquiries relevant, regulated-updated information pertinent to investors and exporters. SLIEPA participated in the familiarization visit to the expo in Brussels. They will actively undertake a campaign to export fish to buyers worldwide for which this expo is a global market platform.

Post Ebola strategies of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation

by Dr. Ansumana R. M. Sillah- Director of Environmental Health



One of the key strategies of the Environmental Health Division in the Ministry of Health and Sanitation during Post-Ebola is to get sanitation right and also to ensure food safety in the country. To achieve this, twenty-five Public Health Aides have been trained with support from DFID and Adam Smith International (ASI). These new recruits will help to implement the 'Expanded Sanitary

Inspection Compliance and Enforcement' (ESICOME). They will work under the supervision of the Ministry's Environmental Health Officers. Standard operating procedures and guidelines have been developed for the efficient and effective implementation of ESICOME. In order to ensure Food Safety and Public health, a National Food Safety Act is being drafted by the Law Reform Commission and in collaboration with other MDAs. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation recognizes that any proposed solutions to the challenges of food safety and hygiene will require multidisciplinary and multinational approach. Above all, implementation of all measures proposed in the food safety act will enable food safety to be organized in a more coordinated and integrated manner with a view of achieving a high level of health protection. The Ministry believes that the establishment of a New Food Safety Authority as the control point for the country will contribute to a high level of consumer health, protection against unsafe food and consequently will help to restore consumer confidence. With all these accomplished we will be able to export our fish and fisheries products to the EU market and thus generate the much needed revenue for the country.

E-Learning

E-learning means making use of information and communication technology (ICT) to learn. It is an interactive session of training usually via the internet. Précon provides E-Learning solutions for individuals as well as companies and organizations for training on hygiene and food safety. The portfolio of Précon Learning offers a range of E-learning courses that can be chosen from. The courses are defined in a way that they can be used to train employees at the practical level of operation.

The program has been made available to fishery staff concerned and has taken part in the training course on introduction to Food Safety. Certificates are being issued after the training course and a large number of people have done the course. Précon e-learning have proven to be more effective than classroom training. This is because it does actively engage the individual at his own best speed and time. One hour of good e-learning equals four hours of classroom training.

The training is available at <http://www.precon-learning.com>. Please ask Victoria Redwood Sawyer for subscription.

Précon Activities; A New Plan



A good plan is as good a plan until the planner decides to replan his activities and milestones based on evident circumstances.

Although a number of activities have continued over the past 12 months, we also had to replan our schedules for the unfortunate circumstances last year. The new Food Safety bill has been drafted and will soon be proposed

to parliament.

Meanwhile, we are working on the regulations which belong to Sierra Leone under the new act. The first, which is the general hygiene regulations followed by the regulations on official controls and third, a recommendation on new fishery regulations.

In view of these project activities, I feel confident that Sierra Leone can proceed to invite the EU to undertake the certification audit for export of fish and fisheries products from Sierra Leone as of the end of this year.

The key will be that the EU can observe the existence of an independent and trustworthy National Food Safety Authority, one where there is a zealous drive to implement good hygiene practices in the fish supply chain and subsequently in the food supply chain.

Jan Moggré
Précon CEO

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