

**Final report of Validation Workshop for the  
Assessment report and project proposal to strengthen food safety, animal and plant health in Liberia**

*24 September 2010; held at the Liberia Chamber of Commerce, Monrovia, Liberia*

**Introduction**

This validation workshop was organized as part of a project preparation grant (STDF/PPG/324) from the World Trade Organization (WTO) Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) to assess the food safety, animal and plant health system in Liberia, and then to develop a project proposal to strengthen that system. The workshop was held to validate the report of the assessment and the developed project proposal. The workshop was co-sponsored by the Liberia Integrated Framework National Implementation Unit (IF-NIU), as it provided information to Liberian stakeholders on the requirements for meeting the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement of the WTO. A variety of stakeholders in both the public and private sector were invited to the workshop, with many of those in attendance (participant list attached as Annex A).

**Proceedings**

The opening session was chaired by Mr. Amin Modad, head of the IF-NIU. Mr. Modad welcomed all participants to the workshop, particularly the two Ministers that were present at the high table, and referred to the Diagnostic Trade Integrated Study (DTIS) that was conducted in the country, which recommended that a national standards body should be created. The speaker also noted that in order to meet the membership requirements of the WTO, Liberia must strengthen its SPS system. He outlined the timetable for the workshop (attached as Annex B) and indicated that a donor partners meeting would subsequently be held to ascertain their interest in funding the proposed project.

Honorable Minister Miata Beysolow of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry then provided the workshop opening remarks, emphasizing the importance of Liberia improving its food safety, animal and plant health system (or SPS system), as a requirement for WTO accession, and to enable the country to someday be able to export food and agricultural products. She also noted that Liberia currently imports a great deal of food products, and must ensure that they are safe and not fraudulent. The Honorable Minister also underlined the commitment of the Ministry of Commerce to work with other Ministries, particularly the Ministries of Agriculture and Health & Social Welfare, to strengthen the food safety, animal and plant health system. She thanked all the participants for attending, particularly the Minister of Agriculture who personally attended to provide special remarks in the opening session, despite her busy schedule.

The Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Florence Chenoweth, then gave special remarks, emphasizing the importance of ensuring the health of plants and animals in Liberia's efforts to re-vitalize agricultural production. She also highlighted the high value that the Ministry of Agriculture places on collaborating with other Ministries, such as the Ministry of Commerce and Health & Social Welfare, in strengthening the SPS system in the country. The Honorable Minister then listed a number of examples of poor practices in food safety occurring in the country, emphasizing the urgent need for improving food safety in the country. The speaker noted the high level of food insecurity in the country, and the need to ensure that the little food that is available is safe. The importance of private sector involvement in strengthening the SPS system was also highlighted. Those responsible for securing the funding for the STDF project preparation grant were also thanked.

Mr. Dehweln Yeaboh, the Director of the Environmental and Occupational Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare then provided remarks on behalf of the Honorable Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Walter Gwenigale, who was out of the country. Mr. Yeaboh emphasized the Ministry of Health's commitment to working with other ministries to continue to improve the health of all people in Liberia. He noted that improving food safety will reduce food-borne illness, which will increase the quality of life in Liberia, as well as work productivity.

Following self-introductions by all participants, Ms. Clara Doe Mvogo, National Technical Consultant (NTC) with the West African Quality Program (WAQP) then presented a background to the STDF project which conducted the assessment and developed the project proposal, introduced the international and national consultants working on the project, and outlined the objectives of the workshop (presentation attached as Annex C).

Dr. Londa Vanderwal, the international consultant working on the project preparation grant then provided an overview of the Biosecurity capacity assessment report that she drafted, as well as the project proposal prepared to strengthen the food safety, animal and plant health system in Liberia (presentation attached as Annex D). The presentation also provided background information the SPS Agreement and on the importance of an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health. A time of questions and discussion followed the presentation. Participants discussed various points of interest from the presentation and their comments on the capacity assessment report which was provided to the participants with their invitation to the workshop. Some of the main points discussed include the following:

- Information on OIE (World Organization for Animal Health).
- The movement of cocoa in and out of Liberia, as well as the importance of ensuring the quality and safety of cocoa produced and sold from Liberia.

Modifications have been made to the assessment report based on all the issues raised by the workshop participants. The international consultant also welcomed any other comments from participants on the assessment report, as well as the project proposal.

Participants then divided into groups to discuss various sections of the project proposal which was distributed. Groups were divided as follows:

- 1) People working in areas related to health reviewed pages 1-7 of the project proposal
- 2) Participants in areas related to agriculture reviewed page 8 of the proposal (project budget)
- 3) Those in areas related to commerce and industry reviewed Annex 1 of the project proposal, the plans for the standards body

After a time of lively group discussion, the rapporteur of each group reported on their discussions, which are reflected in the revised project proposal document. All participants were then allowed to comment on the presentations by each group. In particular, participants discussed the need for careful budgeting of the project proposal, as well as the need to look carefully at other standards organizations in Africa to learn best practices that can be applied to the development of a standards body in Liberia.

The workshop indicated their overall agreement and validation of the assessment report and project proposal, with the expectation that it would be revised as suggested by the workshop.

## **Conclusions**

Following the group presentations and discussions on the project proposal, the international consultant provided her conclusions from the workshop, as well as the way forward for strengthening food safety, animal and plant health in Liberia. The high level of participation by various stakeholders was praised, as well as the useful feedback on the assessment report and the project proposal. The consultant indicated that she would incorporate all comments received into the documents, and welcomed any subsequent comments from the participants. The consultant indicated that the Integrated Framework National Implementation Unit would work with the WTO STDF secretariat to secure donor funding for the project, including a planned donor partner consultation in the future.

The Assistant Minister for Industry, Mr. Sei Ghan, then closed the workshop with a vote of thanks. He underlined the importance of – as well as the high level of support for – strengthening the food safety, animal and plant health system in Liberia. The presence of the Ministers of Commerce & Industry and of Agriculture, as well as high-level representation from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare also highlights the commitment of these ministries, as well as the other stakeholders in attendance, to work together for the betterment of the country. The Assistant Minister thanked all the participants, the presenters – particularly the two Ministers – and the sponsors of the workshop, including the STDF and the IF-NIU. The Liberia Chamber of Commerce was also thanked for hosting the workshop, and their active participation in the entire project.

### **Annexes**

- Annex A: Participant list
- Annex B: Workshop timetable
- Annex C: Presentation by Ms. Clara Doe Mvogo
  - o Project background and workshop objectives
- Annex D: Presentation by Dr. Londa Vanderwal
  - o Capacity assessment report and project proposal

**Annex A.****Validation workshop- Needs assessment and proposal to strengthen Liberia's SPS system**

24 September 2010- Sponsored by STDF and Integrated Framework (IF)

## Participant list

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**VALIDATION  
WORKSHOP  
FOR THE  
ASSESSMENT REPORT ON  
FOOD SAFETY, ANIMAL AND  
PLANT HEALTH SYSTEMS  
&  
PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN  
SANITARY & PHYTO-SANITARY  
REGIME  
OF  
LIBERIA**



**Liberia Chamber of Commerce  
Conference Room  
Friday, September 24, 2010  
9:00 am**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 9:00—9:30          | Registration  |
| 9:30—9:40          | Welcome Remarks<br><i>Amin Modad, Integrated Framework</i>  |
| 9:40—9:50          | Opening Remarks<br><i>Minister Miata Beysolow</i><br>Ministry of Commerce & Industry                  |
| 9:50—10:00         | Special Remarks<br><i>Minister Florence Chenoweth</i><br>Ministry of Agriculture                      |
| 10:00—10:10        | Special Remarks<br><i>Dr. Minister Walter Gwenigale</i><br>Ministry of Health & Social Welfare        |
| 10:10—10:20        | Introduction of Participants  |
| 10:20—10:30        | Objective of Validation Workshop<br>& Introduction of the Consultant<br><i>Clara Doe Mvogo, UNIDO</i> |
| <b>10:30—11:00</b> | <b><i>Coffee Break</i></b>  |
| 11:00—11:30        | Presentation of Bio-security Capacity<br>Assessment & Project Proposal<br><i>Dr. Londa VanderWal</i>  |
| 11:30—12:00        | Discussion  |
| 12:00—1:00         | Group Break-out for discussion on<br>Assessment and Project Proposal                                  |
| <b>1:00</b>        | <b><i>LUNCH</i></b>   |
| 2:00—2:45          | Group Reports by Rapporteurs  |
| 2:45—3:15          | Discussion  |
| 3:15—3:55          | The Way Forward & Wrap up<br><i>Dr. Londa VanderWal</i>   |
| 3:55—4:00          | VOTE OF THANKS<br><i>Assistant Minister Sei Gahn</i><br>Ministry of Commerce & Industry               |

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

- 1. Standards and Trade Development Facility  
of the World Trade Organization**
- 2. United Nations Industrial Development  
Organization**
- 3. Mr. Steven Mambu, National Consultant**
- 4. Dr. Frederick Norkeh, Deputy Minister of  
Commerce and Industry**
- 5. Assistant Minister Sei Gahn, Ministry of  
Commerce and Industry**
- 6. Decontee T. King Sackie, Ministry of  
Finance**
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- 8. Supervisor Earl Neblett, Environmental  
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- 9. Mr. Langley Nya Kialain, Programme  
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- 10. Mr. Eric T. Cooper, Ministry of  
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**Staff of the Integrated Framework**