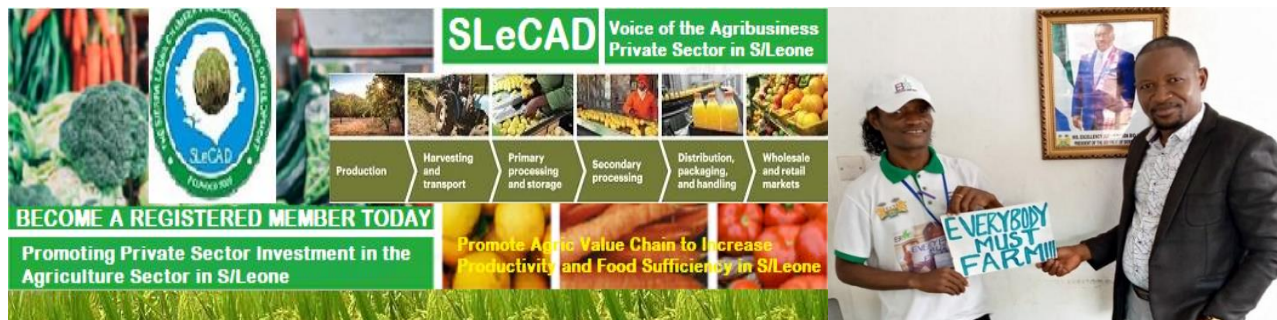




SLeCAD Briefings on Events and Programs



January to October, 2020 has been a special months! As we continue to live with the pandemic, our passion and actions in the agribusiness private sector have not been curtailed. Throughout March to July, this year, we have been taking part in virtual, online Pride events and also provincial trainings, recognising the covid-19 preventive measures.

The Chamber is still continuing its interventions in promoting agribusiness value chains and boosting private investment in the agriculture sector, despite the current challenges (Covid-19 Pandemic). In this edition we bring you more updates of events the Chamber has been undertaking across its operational areas.

Agribusiness Private Sector Meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Kono, Bo, Kenema, and Bombali District, of Sierra Leone.

On the 1st – 6th April, 2020, the Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development (SLeCAD) Membership Held Private Sector Meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) in Kono, Bo, Kenema, and Bombali District, of Sierra Leone. The purpose of the meeting was to plan on how the Chamber and its members in partnership with Bennimix Food Company (BFC) can implement the Bennimix Project and the continuation of the MAF and SCADEP training for SLeCAD members across the districts. The Bennimix project has two components, which are, Promotion of the cultivation of the three value chains (Sorghum, Sesame & Pigeon Pea) and creating market linkage for agribusiness operators in the above three value chains.

The focus of the project is to help farmers most especially the Chamber members in these three value chains by providing Access to inputs, Training and Access to market.

Meeting in Bo District



The meeting in Bo commenced on the 2nd June, 2020, with the District Agriculture Officer (DAO) and team in Bo at MAF compound. Mr King, the program officer- SLeCAD in his opening statement gave a brief background of SLeCAD and the purpose of the meeting.

The deputy district agricultural officer Mr. Samuel Palmer who is also an adviser to the district chamber welcome SLeCAD in Bo and assured of the ministry continued support to the chamber. He said the concept to create market linkage for the farmers and to encourage them to engage in inter cropping farming is welcome news. He said there are already existing farmers that are engaged in the production of sesame, sorghum and pigeon pea, and also other farmers that are ready to engage in the production of the three value chains as long as the market opportunity is available. He encourages the district chamber members to continue with their hard work for the good of the chamber and the country as a whole. He continued that the technical training that will be given to the farmers is very essential and will also enhance farmers to have high yield in their production. The program will also enable farmers to increase on their land size for

increase in production. For the southern region, Moyamba district is identified as the vast area for the production of pigeon peas

Mr. Charles Mansaray, the district extension officer said he will inform all the block extension officers to assist the chamber to identify farmers and intended farmers who want to engage in the production of the three value chains across the southern region. He promised to also inform the block extension officers to assist the chamber to identify the product and help with purchase for the chamber so they can reach their target. He encourages the chamber to continue their good work in the country to achieve food sufficiency. Mr. Charles Mansaray assured SLeCAD that himself and his team will fully support SLeCAD to be successful in their entire project.

The southern regional coordinator for SLeCAD Mr. Max Connell in his statement thank the MAFFS team for the accommodation. He said without the help of the ministry it will be difficult for the chamber to achieve its objectives. Mr. Max Connell continued to say that the good thing about their memberships is, they are all farmers engaged in the production, processing of different value chains. He stated that his team is always prepared to work with the MAF team since they already have an office space in the MAFF building in Bo.

Meeting in Kenema District



On the 3rd June 2020, the Chamber continued its engagement with the district agricultural officer and team at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry office in Kenema, Eastern part of Sierra Leone. The meeting started with an opening statement by Mr. King, the program and agribusiness officer for SLeCAD, briefing the participants the background of the chamber and its achievement in the agribusiness private sector so far. He expressed his thanks and appreciation to MAF DAO and his team for their support to the district chamber and asked for

continued support to the chamber's intervention in boosting Agribusiness private investment in that part of the country.

In response, the district agricultural officer Mr. Philip Conteh welcome the team and advise the membership of the district chamber to add value to the chamber and to continue making sacrifices for the chamber and also encourages the membership to be active. He said Agripreneurs need to sacrifice in order to gain more income. He said farmers need to change the narrative of farmers in the Eastern region to not just relied on cocoa and coffee but also engage in other products like the ones highlighted for the Project. He encourages farmers to uphold the opportunities as it will enhances them direct market linkage and it an opportunity for the farmers to increase in their land size. He assured the chamber to give his full support and also asked his team to assist in the identification of the out-growers for the three value chains as this is a welcome news for the farmers in the East.

The district extension officer Mr. Mathew Kanneh promised to reach out to his team in the field i.e. block extension officers to inform them about the opportunities available for farmers. Ge said this is a good opportunity for their farmers and his team will assist the chamber to identify and mobilize farmers that are in production and others that may want to go in the production.

On behalf of the district chamber membership, the public relations officer for the Eastern regional chamber Mr. Ibrahim Smith thanks and appreciate the DAO and team for the reception. In his statement, he pleaded for an office space within the MAFFS regional office as that will help them to be active in carrying their work and it will foster a good collaboration between the chamber and MAF. The DAO responded immediately by allocating an office space within MAF regional building to the district chamber. The memberships of the chamber are ready to work with MAF for identification of the out-growers and accessing the product for purchase at this present moment. He submitted that

the membership is made up of farmers and they are all involved in the production and processing of different value chains and will make use of the present opportunity as farmers.

Meeting in Kono District



SLeCAD continued its engagement in Kono district, Southern region of Sierra Leone, facilitated by the Agribusiness Value Chain Officer, Mr. Sylvester Bona. In an opening statement, Mr. Bona thanked the district chamber executive for holding up to the operation and activities as they keep coming. He said that the purpose of visiting is to plan on how to implement the Bennimix Project and the continuation of the MAF and SCADeP training for the year 2020.

SLeCAD district coordinator David T. Somoya welcomed members and partners of the chamber, he said, he is happy for such a turnout for the meeting and he pleaded to farmers to pay attention to farming at this difficult time because after COVID-19 it will be difficult for food supply in the country.

The District Agriculture Officer (DAO) – Kono thanked SLeCAD for their effort in making sure agriculture is on track at this challenging time. He said, they have been working together for the past years and it has been good time working with them. DAO said he is happy for such a project in his district of operation and believes if the project will be well implemented, can bridge the gap in terms of access to input, access to market and knowledge of BDS and Value chain approaches.

He continues to say farmers need support as during this COVID-19 crisis, farming operations have been dwindling and much needs to be done to bring it back on track.

The DAO said he will inform all the extension officers to assist SLeCAD to identify farmers and intended farmers who want to engage in the production of the three value chains across the district. He said he will also inform the block extension officers to assist the chamber to identify the product and help with purchasing for the chamber, so they can reach their target. He also encourages the chamber to continue their good work in the country to achieve food sufficiency. He assured SLeCAD that he and his team will do all what they can for SLeCAD to be successful in their entire project. He said they are not only going to help in the identification of the out growers but will assist SLeCAD to supervise and ensure that the identified farmers are doing the right thing.

Mr. Komba (**SLeCAD executive Kono**) said they are happy to get this welcome news even though they were expecting it before now. He said during these challenges, there must be some remedy for greater productivity in the district. He said the Kono district chamber lacks basic office equipment that will enable smooth operations. Mr. Komba said that they are still asking to fast track the work on the previous office equipment they were promised from the Chamber headquarters, therein they can make the district office accessible for farmers.

Meeting in Bombali District



The Bombali district meeting was held at the district head quarter, Makeni city.

Mr. Sylvester Bona, the Agribusiness Value Chain Officer- SLeCAD, expressed his appreciation to the district chamber team for keeping the chamber active and running in this difficult time. He said they are appreciative of the administration and encourage them to continue their good works. He further said members should be proactive in taking part in national cake, for these opportunities are for all, and the chamber headquarter is always creating ways for their members.

Mr Bona stated the purpose of the meeting and gave brief background on the implementation of the Bennimix Project in conjunction with the three value chains (Sorghum, Sesame & Pigeon Pea).

David Sellu Sall the DAO Bombali thanks SLeCAD for a move in supporting their member, this will help farmers realize better outcome in their farming operations. He said if they are getting other industries coming in, it is a piece of welcoming news. He assured that the ministry will highly support identifying the farmers and area of predominate cultivation of the named value chains.

The district coordinator, Mr. Bangura thank SLeCAD team for their resilience work during the COVID-19 crisis and asked the chamber to continue with the same spirit to help in reducing food insecurity.

He told Bombali members that, SLeCAD HQ has been working but need to do more. He said he is proud to tell the members that with the help of SLeCAD HQ two members from Bombali district benefited from a World Bank project through the ministry of trade of which he is one of them. Mr. Bangura encourages farmers to pay more attention to their private farming activities to align their selves with opportunities in the sector. He also encourages farmers to develop their business plan as it is an important document to acquired grant or loan.

SLeCAD Engagement with MAF District Officers in Port Loko, Bombali, and Kono in line with other MAF Project offices in the above-named Districts (BAFS, SCADeP, and AVDP)



On 24th -26th June 2020, the Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development (SLeCAD) held an orientation and consultative meeting with MAF district officers in Port Loko, Bombali and Kono district of Sierra Leone. Three meetings were held in a role to engage each sector in planning and continual implementation of the SCADeP project and the orientation of the BAFS\BFC project.

The ES of SLeCAD presented the work plan of BAFS\BFC and the capacity-building assistance from SCADeP project which he says is not enough to a larger extent in bridging the challenges of farmers in moving forward to commercial production, but the little impact should be seen significant in tackling the agribusiness sector in our farming communities. As part of the capacity building training, the chamber will be conducting trainings on products that fall within the SCADeP value chains. He says an agreement has been made with the Chamber and big input dealer companies to establish in Sierra Leone to maintain the supply of hybrid seeds and agro-chemicals to improved yield under cultivation. He also says the project is here to promote market linkage and market access which will help in increasing income return into farmers' pockets.

He stated that the project will target three key areas: Access to input, Training and Access to market\market linkage

The District Agriculture Officer Port Loko district, **Charles A Bangura** welcomes and thanks the SLeCAD team in reaching the district for such a laudable venture, as this is what the farming community need in reducing food insecurity across the country. He said that the above-listed target points are key in addressing food insecurity and SLeCAD has always been working with the ministry in addressing food security challenges. The District Agriculture Office said they are ready to collaborate with the chamber in implementing the project.



The Agribusiness Expert for AVDP project who doubles as the Team Lead for North-West Mrs. Sinnah Massaquo gave a round-down of AVDP project in that part of the country, she says the project will be concentrating on value chain production system where SLeCAD is working in that direction. She said they will be engaging in commodity value chain pilot surveyor – to identify the primary commodity of the different farming communities and how they link to each other. She also said that they will also learn from different partners their challenges and successes of a similar project. She said they are welcoming a close working relationship with the district in Port Loko as they are looking forward to an invitation from the district chamber.

Mr. Bangali thanks the SLeCAD Team for the prompt visit and promise to share the list they are having for training and will be in readiness for any action form SLeCAD district office.

SLeCAD Trains 500 Farmers in Bo, Kenema, Port Loko, Bombali, and Kono District of Sierra Leone



The Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development (SLeCAD) has trained 500 farmers out of 1,500 farmers to be trained under the European Union Boosting Agriculture and Food Security (BAFS) supported project in Bo, Makeni, Port Loko, Kono and Kenema districts on how to develop business plan, package products and market agricultural products along the agricultural value chain and maximize dividend in the agriculture sector.

The training, is one of the SLeCAD and Bennimix Food Company's joint activities funded by EU/BAFS and managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). It was geared towards building the capacity of out-growers on business plan, financial management, agricultural value chain development, value addition, marketing and packaging, and designed to help them understand Business Development Services (BDS) and building the agribusiness and business development capacity of the out-growers and further support their market linkages.

The training was implemented through the European Union Boosting Agriculture and Food Security (BAFS) project.

SLeCAD believes that supporting business development services is an important means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (MDGs) by addressing poverty and empowering the poor and vulnerable farmers/groups.

The Chamber noted that business development services are a very important means of supporting the development of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) which are known to create employment, generate income and contribute to economic development and growth.

At the end of the training, participants were able to gain knowledge on BDS and viewed the training as timely.

Executive Secretary of SLeCAD, Ahmed Nanoh said they would follow up with participants to develop their business plans and present them to the Chamber for review.

He said the district chambers would ensure that, participants are actively engaged in the development of their business plans and their farming activities.

Prior to the training, SLeCAD held an orientation and consultative meetings with officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in Port Loko, Bombali, Kono, Bo, Kenema and other parts of the country.

The meetings were held to engage each sector in planning and continual implementation of the Smallholder Commercialization and Agri-Business Development Project (SCADeP) project and orientation on the BAfS\BFC project.



The Executive Secretary of SLeCAD presented the work plan of BAfS\BFC and the capacity-building assistance from SCADeP project, which he said was not enough to a larger extent in

bridging the challenges of farmers moving forward to commercial production, but that the little impact should be seen as significant in tackling the agribusiness sector in the farming communities.

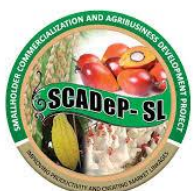
He said as part of the capacity building training, they will be conducting training on products that fall within the SCADeP value chains, stating that an agreement has been reached with the Chamber and big input dealer companies planning to establish in Sierra Leone to maintain the supply of hybrid seeds and agro-chemicals to improve yield under cultivation.



As always, keep an eye on our Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter pages to learn more about new opportunities, engagement and actions in the coming months.

In solidarity,

SLeCAD Communication Unit.



Ministry of Agriculture
and Forestry (MAF)

**Boosting Agriculture and Food
Security (BAfS) Project**



Funded by the
European Union