

PLANS IN GERMANY TO DISPOSE OF PLASTIC WASTES IN SIERRA LEONE



Institute of Marine Biology and Oceanography, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone are in partnership with Technology Services GmbH, Nehlsen Saubere Leistung and Bremen University of Applied Sciences (all in Germany) in the areas of Plastic Wastes Recycling.

Ambassador M'Baimba Baryoh was invited as special guest and took the opportunity to explain the wastes disposal difficulty facing the capital Freetown and was in

agreement with the plans presented by the trio in resolving the problem.

IMBO had earlier in 2009 partnered with Bremen University in the development of a curriculum for training at postgraduate level up to a Masters degree in solid wastes and Resources Management through the CODWAP project. This project was funded by the European Union.

Current partnership project is concentrating on the development of technologies for a vessel-based treatment of Plastic wastes in Sierra Leone and other West African countries. This project concept was developed based on the realisation that although many plastics are produced as wastes in Sierra Leone and other West African countries, none of the countries are producing enough quantities of plastics to ensure 24/7 and 365 days a year operation of a land based plastic wastes treatment facility. The idea was then borne that a vessel-based technology can be developed, such that the vessel can visit Sierra Leone, buy and process all the plastic wastes available, and the vessel can then move to the next country until all the waste plastics in the countries of the west coast have all been bought and processed.

Two delegates from the University of Sierra Leone, Dr. Salieu Kabba Sankoh (IMBO, FBC, USL) and his Research Assistant Mohamed John Gbla, are currently in Hamburg, Germany participating in a workshop, whereby the result of their research are presented to the Education Ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany, who are funding the project and private sector stakeholders who would potentially invest on the technology.

Proceedings of the Workshop are detailed below:

Plastic waste is a major threat to marine ecosystems. Every year, an estimated ten million tonnes of plastic wastes end up in the oceans, where they accumulate and last for centuries before degrading into micro-plastics. It is suspected that when micro-plastics get into the food chain and consumed by humans, they can cause cancer.



To prevent the entry of plastics wastes into the oceans and wider environment, an effective collection and disposal system need to be put in place. This has however been recorded to be a challenge in developing countries like Sierra Leone according to Dr. Sankoh, as a result, the Institute of Marine Biology and Oceanography has partnered with German Waste management/recycling companies and Academic Institutions for the development of a sustainable plastic recycling technology that can help in the management of plastic wastes, not only in Sierra Leone, but in the entire west coast of Africa.

Project Partners comprised of the Institute of Marine Biology and Oceanography (IMBO), University of Sierra Leone (USL), the University of Mauritius (UoM), TECHNOLOG Services GmbH (Germany), Institute of Energy, Recycling and Environment, Bremen GmbH (Germany), and V. Nehlsen GmbH & Co. KG, Bremen (Germany).

The Project workshop was hosted in Hamburg, Germany, by TECHNOLOG Services GmbH between 21st to 25th January 2019 and attended by the Ambassadors of the Republic of Sierra Leone to Germany, His Excellency Dr. M'baimba Lamin Baryoh and his wife, The Ambassador of Mauritius to Germany, Dr. Kheswar Jankee and over 20 representatives from the private sector and Banking Institutions from Germany and representatives from the Federal Republic of Germany.



Delegates from Sierra Leone, Mauritius, Technology Services, Nehlsen Saubere Leistung and Bremen University of Applied Sciences all presented papers at the workshop. At the end of the Sierra Leone presentation, the Sierra Leone Ambassador thanked Dr Salieu Sankoh for his presentation highlighted that the NEW DIRECTION Government in Sierra Leone is trying to improve the

collection and disposal of solid wastes by introducing the general cleaning on the first Saturday of every month. The Ambassador informed his audience that the Freetown landscape consists of lot of hills and slopes and the population of Freetown, which is now nearly two million people has overwhelmed the system that has been in place for the management of solid wastes and plastics. He mentioned that the 10 years civil war in the country has caused a lot of migration from the interior of the country to the capital city and after the war, the people who had migrated to Freetown (internally displaced persons) did not go back to their villages, but that the New Direction Government is doing all in its powers to resettle people back into their villages by providing facilities such as free education, vocational training centres, electricity, water etc. so that the overcrowding and waste management problems in Freetown can be sustainably managed.

Papers presented at the workshop included the plastic waste management situation in Sierra Leone and the Maritius by Dr. Salieu Kabba Sankoh and Dr Avinder. The technical and economic viability of the project were presented by University of Bremen, technology Services and Nehlsen^[1]Saubere Leistung. The project workshop was ended with the assurance that the German team will visit Sierra Leone again together with the Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Germany sometimes this year to further investigate the potentials of processing plastics with the ship-based technology and to get the political buy in of the government of Sierra Leone.

The Sierra Leone Ambassador also used this opportunity to discuss opportunities of getting support for the acquisition of a ferry from the German Government and private sector participants at the workshop.