

SIERRA LEONE INDUSTRIAL FISHING COMPANY ASSOCIATION (SLIFCA)

PUBLIC NOTICE

RE: CONSTRUCTION OF FISH HARBOR COMPLEX AT BLACK JOHNSON BEACH AREA, SIERRA LEONE

The Fishing Industry in Sierra Leone has waited for a fish harbor complex for over 40 years since 1970, with many promises from our major international development partners. The construction of a fish harbor remains the main impediment for unlocking the wealth from the fisheries sector of Sierra Leone.

The membership of the Sierra Leone Industrial Fishing Company Association (SLIFCA) is aware of the planned fish harbor construction project at Black Johnson beach area which is executed by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, with funds granted by the Chinese Government. We would like to inform the public of Sierra Leone and overseas that our membership is in total support of this proposed project for the following reasons:

- 1) As stakeholder group in the fisheries sector, our Association has been part of the negotiations for the establishment of the fish harbor both at local and international level. As main end users of this project, we strongly support its implementation.
- 2) The industrial fisheries sector is currently challenged with berthing, bunkering, vessel maintenance, cold storage and processing facility, transshipment, vessel inspections and catch offloading, packaging materials, and required capacities for middle level manpower in refrigeration, net mending and marine engineering. All these will be addressed as part of the technical backstopping which the fish harbor project will provide for our people.
- 3) The Fish harbor will provide entrance channels and interior channels to allow free movement of our fishing trawlers and other vessels for anchoring areas or turning basins, including support facilities for refueling, vessel repairs, bonded stores for wrapping materials, fish processing platforms including cold storage facilities for renting and other vessel bunkering facilities. All these will provide jobs for thousands of our Sierra Leonean fish processors, fishermen and fishing financiers.
- 4) A fish harbor complex will provide opportunity for our fishing vessels to offload and transship catches on the shores of Sierra Leone instead of at the ports of other countries.

5) Our membership is currently constrained with limitations of adequate berthing areas for our fishing vessels, which have made some of our vessels to choose other countries for doing business. We have lost fishing investments to our neighboring countries such as Ghana, Ivory Coast and Senegal where fish harbor complexes are available.

6) All of our Tuna Vessels (over 60 tuna purse seiners) licensed by Sierra Leone Government and Fishing in the waters of Sierra Leone do not currently transship their catches in Sierra Leone due to the absence of a fish harbor complex. Available designated berthing areas in the country do not meet the minimum standards for offloading and transshipment of fish from tuna vessels. This reduces enormous revenues and economic returns for both the fishing industry and the Government of Sierra Leone

7) We would like to particularly point out to our people of Sierra Leone that the MFMR and SLIFCA is unable to enforce the required regulations for inspection of tuna vessels and other large fishing trawlers due to the absence of fish harbor complex in our country. This undermines the monitoring, control, surveillance (MCS) and the enforcement of hygiene and sanitary controls required for our fish and fishery products to access International markets, including the European Union

Based on the above reasons, we need to set the records straight both inside and outside of the country that referring to this project as a fish meal project or a rain forest sold out to the Chinese Government or Chinese Business interests is far from the truth. We would like to stress that the Black Johnson Beach area was chosen and demarcated for the fish harbor, only after the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and our International development partners had done extensive environmental and social studies on several sites including the Kissy Dockyard Area, Murray Town Axis, Tagrin-Lungi Axis, Tombo Axis, that Black Johnson Beach area was chosen as the best suitable site for the fish harbor, with the least impact on resettlement of local communities and other social and environmental issues.

Signed:

1. **Bassem Mohamed**
President, SLIFCA & Managing Director, Sierra Fishing Company
2. **Annie Joy Toure,**
Vice President, SLIFCA & Managing Director Annsenkal Fishing Company
- 3) **Alhaji Ibrahim Konteh,**
Secretary General, SLIFCA & Operations Manager, OK Global Fisheries Company