



# UNIDOScope

weekly internet newsletter

## CONTENTS: 18 - 24 July 2004

- ▶ [Working with membership-based Civil Society](#)
- ▶ [ITPO Tokyo hosts delegate from Sri Lanka](#)
- ▶ [COMING SOON](#)
- ▶ [OTHER INDUSTRY NEWSLETTERS](#)

- ▶ [Current Feature](#)
- ▶ [PRINT-FRIENDLY VERSIONS of UNIDOScope](#)

## previous issues this month

[11 - 17 July](#)  
[4 - 10 July](#)

## previous months

[Jun-2004](#)  
[May-2004](#)  
[Apr-2004](#)  
[Mar-2004](#)

## Working with membership-based Civil Society



women entrepreneurs celebrate the PREPAO pilot  
- funding needed to continue the momentum -  
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[PREPAO photo gallery portrait pictures](#)

Women in West Africa represent approximately 48 per cent of the active population and play a crucial role in the development of private entrepreneurship, particularly in the informal sector in rural areas, where they are responsible for production, processing, packaging and distribution of agro-products. Their work could be more productive and more rewarding for themselves and their national economies if improvements could be made in their access to technology and training in processing, food safety and marketing techniques. *UNIDO's PROGRAMME REGIONAL D'APPUI AU SECTEUR AGRO-ALIMENTAIRE DANS LES PAYS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST* (PREPAO for short) successfully concluded a three month pilot phase in Guinea, Mali and Senegal, in December 2003, that addresses these needs in a new way.

The first aspect of the new approach behind PREPAO is to deal directly with membership-based civil society organizations (CSOs) and at the same time to maintain the valuable connections with government ministries and industry chambers, UNIDO's traditional counterparts. In the PREPAO, therefore, the national counterparts are the Economic and Social Councils of the three countries, targeting small and micro food processing enterprises run by women in rural areas. In addition to dealing directly with membership-based CSOs the other innovative aspect of the programme is that it is trying to mobilise funds to support the programme from the local private sector. To get the full involvement of the key players in the national economies, Steering Committees (such as the one in Guinea) will be established which include Ministers, Presidents of Chambers of Industries, Presidents of Economic and Social Councils and CEO's of private enterprises.

The Millennium Declaration and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) both recognise

the importance of strengthening the partnership between governments, the private sector and civil society organizations in promoting development and reducing poverty. There is an increasing recognition by governments of the advantages of dealing with membership-based CSOs that are well informed about micro and small enterprises' (MSEs) needs and can quickly and adequately respond to them. Dealing with CSOs is not new for UNIDO, but until now that has mainly meant dealing through Chambers of Industries with the support of the Ministry of Industry.

The PREPAO pilot project has shown positive results in a very short time and modest budget (US\$260,000). Following the selection of products, regions and their corresponding membership-based organizations, a workshop took place in November 2003, Conakry, Guinea. The opening and closing ceremonies of the workshop were attended by the Prime Minister of Guinea and several Ministers. Workshop participants included Presidents of the Economic and Social Councils of Guinea, Mali and Senegal and representatives of the diplomatic missions of several countries (Canada, China, France, United States, Mali and Senegal). Most importantly, in accordance with the basic philosophy behind PREPAO, of the 230 or so people who participated, 85-90% of them were women from micro and small enterprises.

The pilot phase was implemented in the following regions: Kindia and Kankan in Guinea, Bamako region in Mali, and Casamance in Senegal, where a preliminary assessment was also made for Tambacunda. The selected products for processing were: fruits, vegetables and cereals (Guinea, Mali and Senegal) and smoked fish (Guinea). In total, the pilot phase of the project assisted around 1354 women associated with 20 CSOs in the three countries as well as the staff from affiliated regional and national CSOs. The 20 organizations assisted include five CSOs with more than 2450 women. One of these five, COFEG, an organization for the coordination of Ginean women's CSOs, represents 45 associations and 15 production units with 862 women.

The success of the pilot PREPAO is due to the commitment of both the public and private actors and on the attention paid to the choice of the products, regions and membership-based CSOs. Important criteria in the choice of basic products were: scale of production; the existence of surplus stock and lack of preservation methods (potential for post-harvest loss reduction); lack of sales outlets; opportunity to create added value; period of availability of products; and income generation potential of the product. Some of the regions chosen for the pilot project are close to the border of the three countries as the next phase of the project will work on identifying products from each country that complement each other (bueurre de Karité) and that together have export potential. Once the products and geographical regions were decided on, CSOs were chosen that were capable of initiating trends and mastering and spreading innovations.

Tangible results of the pilot PREPAO are: longer shelf life of products; quantity and quality of products increased; productivity increased (working hours and physical effort reduced); work hazards reduced; "lead products" identified; and linkages established between CSOs and between CSOs and more formal actors.

The greatest success of the pilot PREPAO is the commitment and ownership which it has generated in the membership-based CSOs. The enthusiasm of the latter is such that they continue to work on the project even though it has formally concluded. It is critical for further success that this momentum not be lost. Additional funding will be requested from UNIDO to continue the programme and address some of the more urgent needs, while fund raising efforts continue within the PREPAO Steering Committees.

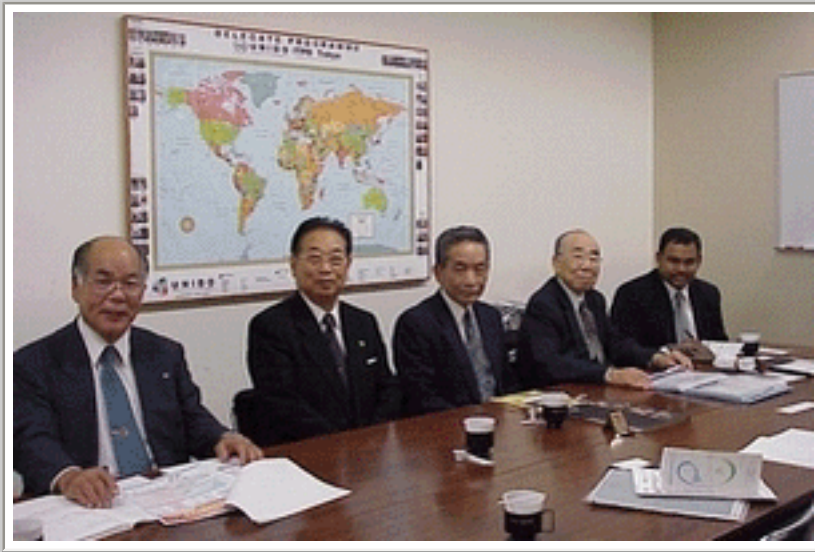
The PREPAO objective of mobilising private-sector funds does not mean funds from more conventional sources will not be used! In Guinea, the UNIDO team paid a visit to the representative of the World Bank and explained the concept. "it was music to my ears" said UNIDO team leader, Victor Hinojosa, "when the World Bank representative said, "what you are trying to do is exactly what we want to fund"". "But for the World Bank funds to be made available to the project, the request has first to come from the government". Moves are now being made in Guinea for this to take place. The "Comité de Parrainage" was established in Guinea on 13 July 2004. Once funds are secured, it is expected that the "Comité de Parrainage" will be transformed into the Steering Committee of PREPAO.

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# UNIDO ITPO Tokyo Delegate Programmes for Egypt, Morocco, Sri Lanka and India this week: The Sri Lankan Delegate

Tokyo, Japan 10 May - 11 June, 2004



*the Sri Lankan delegate: 42 meetings across Japan*

Between March and June this year, UNIDO Investment Technology Promotion Office Tokyo ([ITPO Tokyo](#)) hosted delegates from Egypt (22 March - 23 April), Morocco (10 May - 17 June), Sri Lanka (10 May - 11 June) and India (17 May - 18 June), to undertake investment and technology promotion activities in Japan.

The UNIDO ITPO Delegate Programme is a mechanism by which staff of developing country institutions involved in investment promotion get hands-on experience at one of [UNIDO's ITPOs](#). In addition to being an important and effective part of the capacity-building efforts of the UNIDO

ITPOs, it is not uncommon for delegates to go home with valuable contracts. Regardless of the immediate result, all go back with valuable contacts. ITPO Tokyo is one of the most active promoters of the Delegate Programme.

The Delegates from Egypt ([see UNIDOScope 4 - 10 July 2004](#)), Morocco, Sri Lanka and India have each sent UNIDOScope a brief assessment of their time in Tokyo.

This week we present the story of Mr. M.H.K.M. Hameez, an investment promotion expert from the Sri Lankan Board of Investment, who was at ITPO Tokyo from 10 May to 11 June 2004. Mr. Hameez joined the Sri Lankan Board of Investment in 2000 and is currently in charge of investment promotional activities in East Asia. While in Japan, Mr. Hameez outlined the investment climate and promising investment fields in Sri Lanka, focusing on IT, the electronic and automotive industries, and related projects.



*Sri Lanka Board of Investment Delegate to ITPO Tokyo, M.H.K.M. Hameez*

*The primary objective of my visit to ITPO Tokyo was to promote Sri Lanka as a destination for FDI especially in the ICT, Electronics and Automobile Parts sectors. Seventeen projects proposed by Sri Lankan businesses were presented to Japanese businesses. During the five week programme, 42 meetings were conducted with potential investors from the private and public sectors.*

*A good percentage of time was spent on one-on-one business meetings with potential investors across Japan. So far as a result of these meetings, promising inquiries have been received from Japanese entrepreneurs in the following sectors: Health Food; Minerals*

(Illeminite, Zircon); Wood and Paper (Kenaf, Jatropha, etc.); ICT; and Automobile parts. In addition to the latter, numerous inquiries were received relating to resource-based industries.

The Sri Lankan Board of Investment reckons that there is an immense potential in attracting 'traditional industries' from Japan to Sri Lanka. Other attractive features presented to Japanese investors were the potential of Sri Lanka as a springboard to service the heavily populated South Asian Region due to its strategic location and the market access offered by its Free Trade Agreement with India.

The Board will shortly formulate a comprehensive follow up programme taking into account all contacts made during the delegate programme and will continue to seek Japanese investments with the assistance of organizations like UNIDO ITPO Tokyo, whose assistance is invaluable for a smaller economy like Sri Lanka.

Next week:India

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## [coming events](#)

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