

3rd African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum – AFRAF

The National Food Control System in The Gambia



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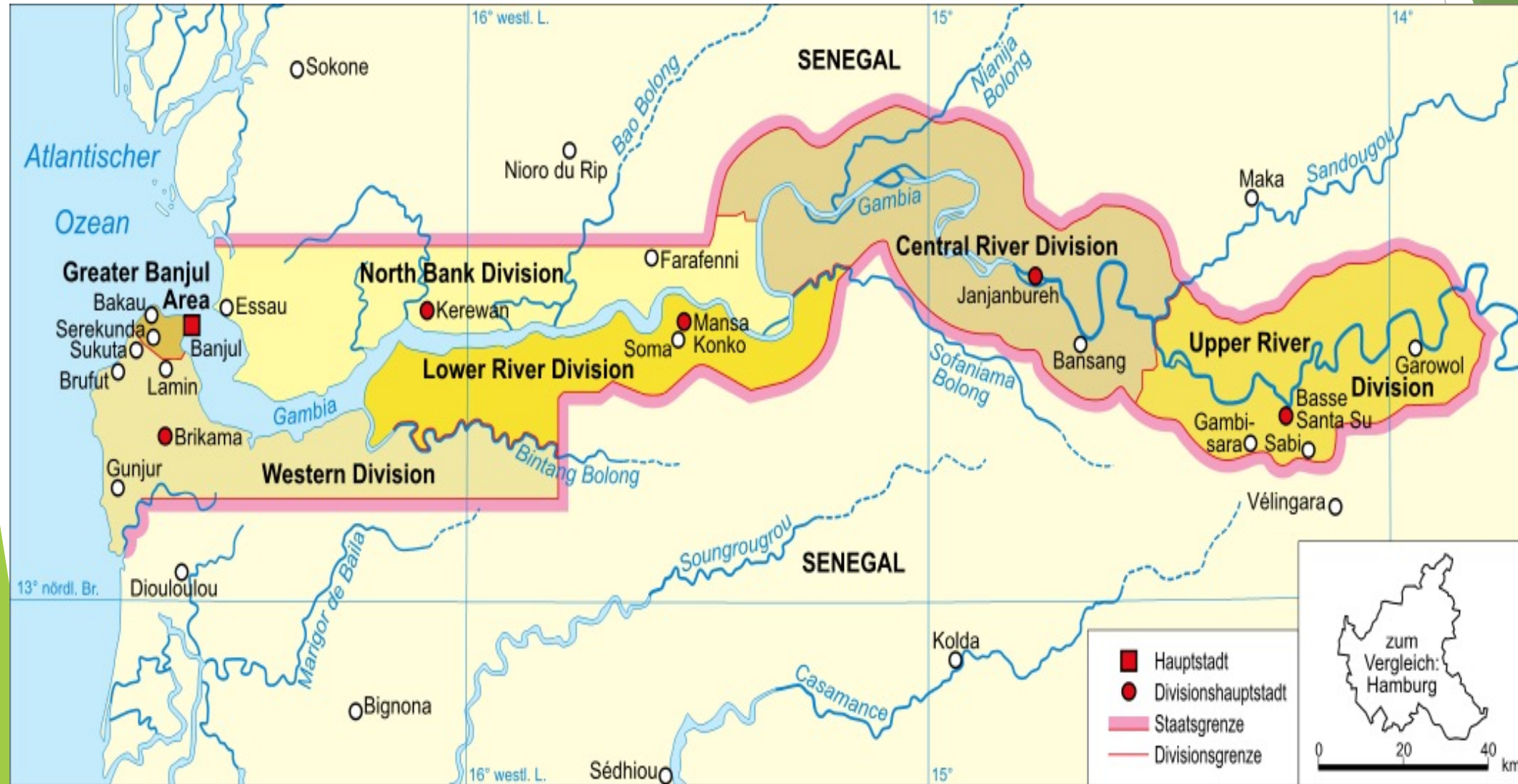
Food Safety and Quality Authority of The Gambia

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Legal Framework
- ▶ Vision & Mission
- ▶ Structures of the Authority
- ▶ Functions of the Authority
- ▶ Applied food control systems
- ▶ Mechanisms of food risks and hazards control (emerging risks and emergencies)
- ▶ Needs of FBOs
- ▶ Challenges in NFCS
- ▶ Conclusions & recommendations



MAP OF THE GAMBIA



INTRODUCTION



The Food Safety and Quality Authority is the competent Body mandated to control the safety and quality of food (feed) produced, stored, distributed and sold in The Gambia to ensure that they meet basic prescribed requirements and standards.

It is a semi autonomous body with its structures and functions defined in a legal and institutional framework.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- ▶ This agency is legislated by the Food Safety and Quality Act 2011 to take.
- ▶ The enacted food safety law placed all food safety matters under a unitary Agency giving it full control of food and feed safety issues in the country.
- ▶ The agency is the Food Safety and Quality Authority of The Gambia.
- ▶ Mandated it to formulate regulations in the official control of food
- ▶ Delegating powers to stakeholder institutions in food control



VISION & MISSION



Vision

- ▶ To ensure an integrated and coherent approach by ensuring that all relevant food safety hazards are taken into account and that resources are allocated to controls according to risks of food safety hazards impacting negatively on consumer health, trade and commerce.

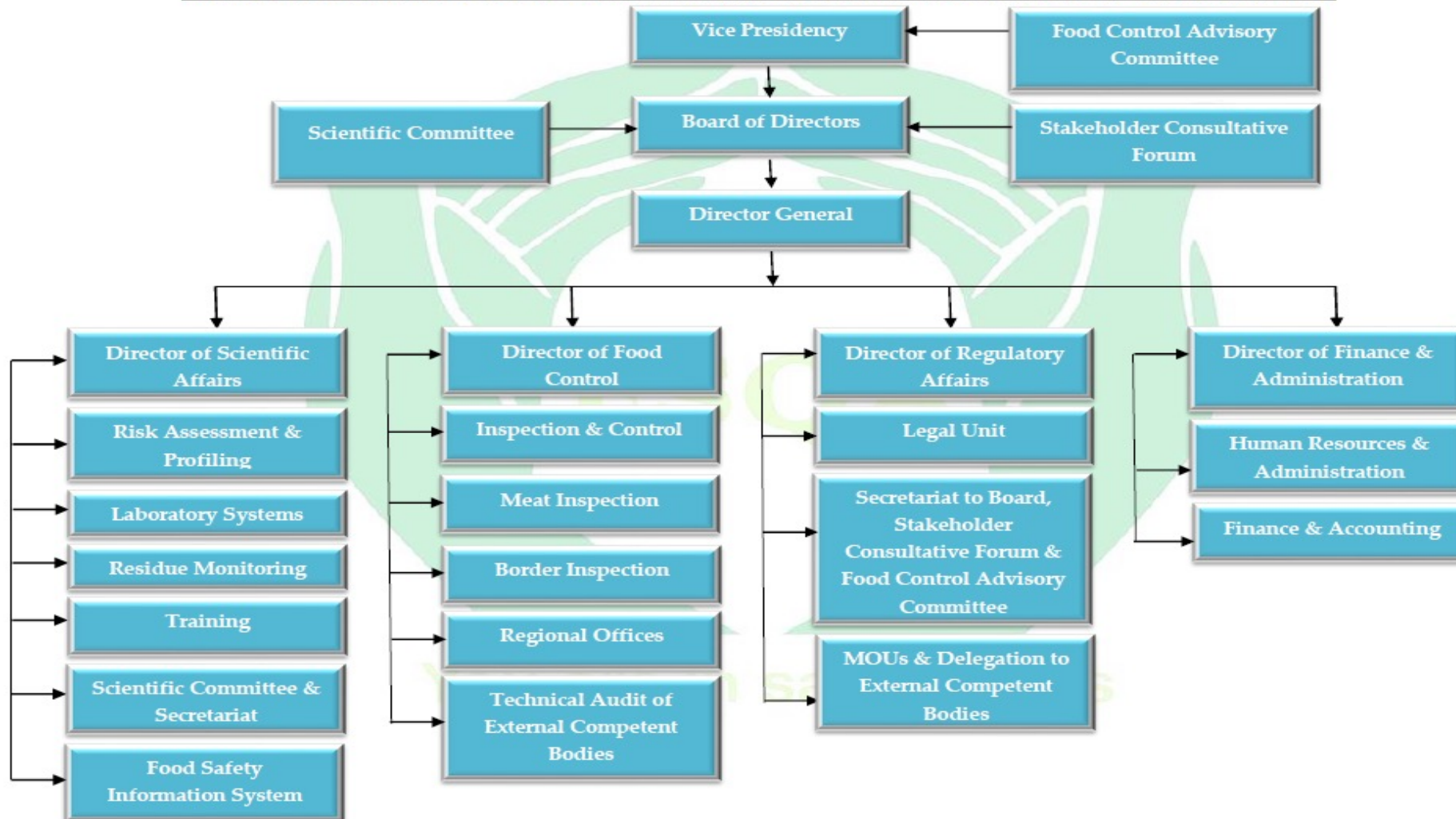
Mission

- ▶ To strengthen compliance to standards by Food Business Operators to ensure the availability of safe and quality food for all.

STRUCTURES OF THE AUTHORITY



ORGANOGRAM OF FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY AUTHORITY THE GAMBIA



FUNCTIONS OF THE AUTHORITY

- ▶ Carrying out the overall official control of food safety and quality;
- ▶ Ensuring that food and feed comply with legal requirements, or where appropriate with approved codes of good practice;
- ▶ Carrying out inspection, sampling, and certification of food and feed for import and export when so required;
- ▶ Inspecting establishments, processes and products throughout the production and distribution chain;
- ▶ Assessing laboratory services in terms of technical capacity to carry out food and feed analysis for official control;
- ▶ Codex Contact Point



FUNCTIONS OF THE AUTHORITY –Ctd.

- ▶ Delegating food and feed safety and quality responsibilities to Competent Bodies and persons
- ▶ Participating in activities relating to standards and technical regulations for food and feed at the national, regional and international levels;
- ▶ Promoting the development of frameworks of mutual recognition with foreign food safety authorities;
- ▶ Ensuring that the adopted inspection procedures are based on risk assessment;
- ▶ Developing and enforcing a code of conduct for Competent Bodies and Persons; and
- ▶ Maintaining well trained and competent staff within the Authority.
- ▶ SPS Enquiry Point



APPLIED FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS



- ▶ The Gambia is currently operating a preventative food safety control system.
- ▶ The system covers controls of food safety issues from farm to the fork.
- ▶ Inspectors are dispatched daily to control internal markets, street food, butcheries, bakeries, abattoirs and slaughter houses, supermarkets, retail shops, restaurants, etc.)
- ▶ Registration and licensing of all Food Business Operators throughout the value chain
- ▶ Guidelines for inspections and import/export certification developed and operational

APPLIED FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS ctd.

- ▶ Participation in development of food standards and continuous formulation of technical regulations on priority products
- ▶ Rejection, recall, confiscation, detention and disposal of unfit food products
- ▶ Closures, fines, and prosecution of businesses with serious violation issues
- ▶ Promoting self regulation through chambers of commerce, communities and associations
- ▶ Introduction of Food Safety Information System (FSIS)
- ▶ Toll free line
- ▶ Decentralisation and expansion of food safety work and presence to rural Gambia



MECHANISMS OF FOOD RISKS AND HAZARDS CONTROL (EMERGING RISKS AND EMERGENCIES)

- ▶ Regular Inspections and audits of food businesses
- ▶ Residue monitoring in plants and animal products
- ▶ Awareness creation on food hazards and risks (TV, community radios, drama, debates, social media)
- ▶ Introduction of One Health platform to approach food safety
- ▶ Monitoring laboratory to support scientific work on compliance and conformity, risk profiling and risk assessment
- ▶ National Food Emergency response protocol in development which provides for coordinated, timely, resource based and effective stakeholder action.



NEEDS OF FBOs

- ▶ FBOs to be supported with regular training on PRPs, GHP, HACCP, ISO to ensure basic hygiene practices in food establishments. and other quality training, coaching and certification
- ▶ Provision of a robust quality management systems
- ▶ Adequate and appropriate storage, packaging and labeling of products
- ▶ Access to key markets – regional and international
- ▶ Availability, accessibility, affordability of accredited food testing and metrology laboratories
- ▶ Broader participation in decision making processes and procedures in the food control systems



CHALLENGES IN NFCS

- ▶ Inadequate National Quality Infrastructure
- ▶ Weak scientific infrastructure and expertise support base
- ▶ Inadequate human and material resources to effectively implement the National food Control system
- ▶ Technical capacity of national experts on codex work is limited. Experts need to be trained more on codex, SPS and in the work of scientific committees



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Reducing/removing SPS bottlenecks for exports/exports, such as solving capacity gaps for improving market access,
- ▶ Reducing the risks of diseases and the health burden caused by unsafe food, or removing bottlenecks to imports.
- ▶ The National Codex System and its framework has been well established in the country.
- ▶ Build on Capacity (personnel) and Infrastructure of food testing Laboratories.
- ▶ Develop and increase participation of technical and scientific experts in national food safety issues and Codex work (EWG).



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Increase national scientific input by producing reliable data and maintaining a robust database.
- ▶ Encourage regional partnership initiatives to enhance participation (co-funding, harmonisation, twinning)
- ▶ Strengthen the role of donor community in capacity development, - technical assistance, participation in international meetings and technical working groups



THANK YOU, MERCI,



You are in safe hands

