

Committee in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

APPLICANTS FOR OBSERVER STATUS

Note by the Secretariat¹

Addendum

1. An application for observer status in the SPS Committee was received on 13 September 2011 from the African Union (AU). Information from the official website of the AU is summarized below.

1. Membership (54)

Algeria	Liberia
Angola	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Benin	Madagascar
Botswana	Malawi
Burkina Faso	Mali
Burundi	Mauritania
Cameroon	Mauritius
Cape Verde	Mozambique
Central African Republic	Namibia
Chad	Niger
Comoros	Nigeria
Congo, Rep. of	Rwanda
Cote d'Ivoire	Republic Arab Saharawi
Dem. Rep. of Congo	Sao Tome
Djibouti	Senegal
Egypt	Seychelles
Equatorial Guinea	Sierra Leone
Eritrea	Somalia
Ethiopia	South Africa
Gabon	South Sudan
The Gambia	Sudan
Ghana	Tanzania
Guinea	Tunisia
Guinea-Bissau	Uganda
Kenya	Zambia
Lesotho	Zimbabwe

¹ This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights or obligations under the WTO.

2. Mandate, scope and area of work

2. The AU was established under the Constitutive Act of the African Union, adopted in 2000 at the Lomé Summit in Togo. It entered into force in 2001. The objectives of AU include, inter alia:

- To accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent and to promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
- To encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- To establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
- To promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
- To promote cooperation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
- To coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- To advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology;
- And to work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.

The ultimate objective of AU is to enable all member states to adopt coordinated positions on matters of common concern to the continent in international fora and defend the interests of Africa effectively.

3. The AU has observer status in Codex, IPPC, OIE and an ad hoc observer status on a meeting-by-meeting basis in the Committee on Trade and Development at the WTO.

4. Having observer status in the WTO SPS Committee would enable the AU Commission to provide effective support and guidance to the participating AU member states and the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the affairs of the Committee. It will also enhance the significant role of the AU Commission in providing support to its member states in their participation in the affairs of the WTO.

5. The AU Commission, through the Participation of African Nations in the International Standard-Setting Organizations (PANSPSO) Project, is already supporting the RECs to acquire observer status, not only in the WTO, but also in the OIE, the CAC and the IPPC. It would, therefore, be appropriate for the AU Commission to effectively participate in these fora.

6. The AU, through its African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC), has several activities that relate to SPS matters.

Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (IBAR)

7. The functions of the AU Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) are summarized as follows:

- (a) Improve public and animal health through the control and possible eradication of transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses;
- (b) Improve the management of animal resources and the natural resource bases on which they depend;
- (c) Explore investment options and enhance competitiveness of African animal products;
- (d) Contribute to the development of relevant standards and regulations and enhance compliance by member states;
- (e) Strengthen institutional capacity and support policy development and harmonization;
- (f) Disseminate information and knowledge on animal resources to member states, Regional Economic Communities and other relevant institutions; and
- (g) Provide essential support to member states with special needs or in emergency situations.

8. AU-IBAR coordinates capacity development to set and comply with essential production and trade standards relevant for animals and animal products, and to strengthen the capacities of public and private institutions to effectively perform their core roles, in order to transform the animal resources sector for greater impact on poverty alleviation. These efforts will be intensified through the provision of timely and reliable up-to-date data, information and knowledge on animal resources to support planning and decision-making.

9. AU-IBAR has organized its projects under its strategic plan 2010 - 2014 into six strategic programmes:

Programme 1: Reducing the impact of transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses on livelihoods and public health in Africa;

Programme 2: Enhancing Africa's capacity to conserve and sustainably use its animal resources and their natural resource base;

Programme 3: Improving investment opportunities and competitiveness of animal resources in Africa;

Programme 4: Promoting development of, and compliance with, standards and regulations;

Programme 5: Improving knowledge management in animal resources to facilitate informed and timely decision-making;

Programme 6: Facilitating development of policies and institutional capacities for improved utilization of animal resources in Africa.

10. AU-IBAR recognizes the reality for partnership building and will adapt the most efficient and effective arrangements to get things done. Operationally, these projects will be implemented in close collaboration with the RECs and member states. Technically, key partners like FAO, OIE and WHO will be engaged as and when required within the framework of One Health.

Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC)

11. The AU Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) is a project purposely built to ensure effective control systems against harmful organisms on plants and plant products based on standard procedures and quality management systems, through the whole phytosanitary sector of African countries, so as to enhance crop production and trade. It aims at strengthening the procedures and standardizes the work at the Phytosanitary Administration of African countries, and its work includes:

- (a) enhancing phytosanitary capacity evaluation;
- (b) promoting pest surveillance;
- (c) risk analysis;
- (d) laboratories for diagnostics and phytosanitary inspection at borders entry points that apply to general phytosanitary actions by bringing them to comply with SPS issues and International Standards for Phytosanitary Measure (ISPM); and
- (e) undertaking training, in order to achieve in National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) more effective control system in relation to pests and diseases.

3. Reciprocity

12. The WTO Secretariat has not requested observer status in the African Union. The WTO Secretariat is, however, an observer in the PAN-SPSO Steering Committee under AU-IBAR.
