



**WTO SPS COMMITTEE MEETING
18–22 MARCH 2013, GENEVA SWITZERLAND**

INFORMATION ON SPS ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN UNION

The following communication, received on 14 March 2013, is being circulated at the request of the African Union.

1 CAPACITY BUILDING

1.1. From 27 to 30 November 2012, AU-IBAR with the technical assistance of the Secretariat of the SPS Committee, STDF, OIE and IPPC, conducted a refresher training of trainers' workshop for the effectiveness of the participation of African countries in the activities of international standard setting organizations, in Dakar, Senegal. The workshop targeted African French-speaking countries. It was attended by 32 participants from 23 countries and four participants from four regional organizations.

1.2. Beneficiaries of the trainings were from the three sub-sectors (animal health, plant health and food safety), from the private sector as well as the SPS focal points or notification authorities that had previously attended regional or continental training of trainers.

2 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.1. In order to foster the inter-sectoral coordination at country level with regard to SPS matters, the African Union has supported the member States to establish national SPS coordination mechanisms (SPS committees) where they do not exist or to strengthen them where they exist.

2.2. Before the existence of the AU-IBAR's "Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards-setting Organizations" (PAN-SPSO) project, seven countries had established national SPS committees. With the support of AU-IBAR, thirty-three more were established. The list of countries where national SPS committees were established (marked *), prior to and after the start of the PAN-SPSO project, are outlined in table 1. Among them, only six countries have used a legal framework to create them and to allocate a budget for their functioning.

2.3. Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Togo requested AU-IBAR's assistance to hold meetings of SPS stakeholders to establish or strengthen the national SPS committees.

Table 1: National SPS Committees

	COUNTRIES	EXISTENCE YES OR NO	LEGAL FRAMEWORK
1	Burkina Faso	YES	YES
2	Senegal	YES	NO
3	Mauritania	YES	NO
4	Mali	YES	NO
5	Niger	YES	YES
6	Morocco	NO	
7	Comoros	NO	
8	Madagascar	NO	
9	Mauritius	YES	NO
10	Malawi	YES	NO
11	Seychelles	YES	NO
12	Zambia	YES	NO
13	Congo Democratic Rep.	YES	NO
14	Eritrea	NO	
15	Burundi	YES	NO
16	Kenya*	YES	NO
17	Rwanda	YES	NO
18	Tanzania	YES	NO
19	Uganda*	YES	NO
20	Cameroon	YES	NO
21	Central African Republic	YES	YES
22	Chad	NO	
23	Congo	YES	NO
24	Equatorial Guinea	YES	NO
25	Gabon	YES	NO
26	Sao Tome & Principe	YES	NO
27	Benin	YES	NO
28	Cape Verde	YES	NO
29	Cote d'Ivoire	YES	
30	Gambia	YES	YES
31	Ghana	YES	NO
32	Guinea	YES	YES
33	Guinea Bissau	YES	
34	Liberia	YES	
35	Nigeria	YES	
36	Sierra Leone	YES	
37	Togo	YES	YES
38	Djibouti	YES	NO
39	Sudan	YES	NO
40	Ethiopia	NO	
41	Somalia	NO	
42	Angola	NO	
43	Botswana*	YES	NO
44	Lesotho*	YES	NO
45	Mozambique	YES	NO
46	Namibia*	YES	NO
47	Egypt	NO	
48	Tunisia	NO	
49	Libya	NO	
50	South Sudan	NO	
51	Swaziland*	YES	NO
52	South Africa	NO	NO
53	Zimbabwe*	YES	NO
54	Algeria	NO	

3 COORDINATION OF SPS RELATED-ACTIVITIES

3.1 Food safety authority and rapid alert system

3.1. On 29 and 30 October 2012 in Kigali, the first workshop of African food safety specialists and Codex contact points was held with the objective to discuss the mechanisms and procedures for putting in place a system for ensuring the safety and quality of food produced and traded on the African continent, and to consider a proposal for establishing a system for alerting all AU member States of any food safety concerns.

3.2. The workshop was attended by 52 participants including food safety specialists, Codex contacts point persons and food safety managers from 29 AU member States, AU Technical Centres, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the European Union (EU), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and EDES.

3.3. The Workshop concluded and recommended that there is a need to urgently consider and adopt the establishment of an AU Food Safety Management Coordination Mechanism (AU-FSMCM) incorporating an Africa-wide Rapid Food and Feed Alert Mechanism (ARFFAM), in the lines of the Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the Interafrican Phytosanitary Council (AU/IAPSC).

3.4. A follow-up workshop is planned to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at a date to be determined.

3.2 Coordination of continental common position for animal health, plant health and food safety since 2009

a. Animal health

A meeting of animal health experts will be held from 25 to 26 March 2013 to analyse and provide comments on the OIE Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes in preparation of the 81st General Session of OIE World Assembly of Delegates.

A meeting of African OIE Delegates will be held from 14 to 15 April 2013 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to build coordinated positions on animal health standards in preparation for the 81st OIE General Session 2013.

b. Food safety

A meeting of African experts on food additives was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4 to 6 February 2013 to provide technical advice to African delegates attending the 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives.

A meeting of African experts on contaminants in food was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4 to 6 February 2013 to provide technical advice to African delegates attending the 7th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food.

c. Plant health

A preparation meeting of the IPPC member countries of the Africa Region for their participation in the 8th CPM Session was held in Entebbe, Uganda, from 11 to 13 March 2013.

3.3 Support to RECs for coordination of regional common positions

3.5. A meeting of OIE Delegates from ECOWAS member States will take place in Abuja, Nigeria, from 28 to 29 March 2013 for regional coordinated positions on OIE animal health standards in preparation for the continental meeting in April 2013 in Côte d'Ivoire.

3.6. A similar meeting will take place in Nairobi on 5 and 6 April 2013 for EAC member States.

3.4 Strengthening consultation processes at national level for articulation of national positions

3.7. Despite the offer made by AU-IBAR to assist member States in consolidating national common positions on SPS standards, no country has requested assistance from AU-IBAR yet.

- Facilitation of attendance to ISSO meetings for RECs and member States

3.8. AU-IBAR supports RECs delegates or member States delegates to attend the international meetings of ISSOs or the WTO SPS committee.

4 SUPPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH SPS STANDARDS

- Identification, traceability systems and certification for pastoral areas:
 - AU-IBAR is implementing activities on identification and traceability of livestock and livestock products and certification in pastoral areas;
 - On-going consultation process with countries and RECs and feasibility studies on-going;
 - Pilot activities in selected countries (Horn of Africa and Sahel) are being launched.
 - Honey compliance with international standards:
 - New project with a component on compliance of honey with international standards is being launched (EU support).
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