



**WTO SPS COMMITTEE MEETING
24–28 JUNE 2013, GENEVA SWITZERLAND**

INFORMATION ON SPS ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN UNION

The following communication, received on 13 June 2013, is being circulated at the request of the African Union.

1 AU-DREA SPS RELATED-ACTIVITIES

1.1. The 6th College-to-College meeting of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Commission was held on 26 April 2013 at the AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) coordinated the working group of the agriculture and food safety and security cluster. The establishment of a contact group for the Cluster Agriculture and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) is in the offing.

1.2. The Agriculture and Food Security Division organized training on organic agriculture for agricultural experts from member States of (i) EAC and (ii) ECOWAS. As a follow-on to the training, DREA received concept notes on geographic indications (GIs) from SADC, EAC and ECOWAS. This will be consolidated towards the development of GI policy for Africa.

1.3. The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) was formally launched by the AUC on 31 October 2012. A meeting was held in April 2013, involving technical experts from agriculture, trade and health sectors was convened to discuss strategic actions for aflatoxin control. It was also to provide input on the strategic direction and future of PACA. The Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA), Nelson Mandela-African Institute for Science and Technology (NM-AIST), and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) co-hosted the meeting.

1.4. DREA was informed of the application made by the Uganda Organic Certification Organization (UgoCert), on behalf of organic stakeholders in East Africa for the recognition of the East African Organic Products Standards (EAOPS) by the European Union.

1.5. The first Quarter Agriculture, Food security and Rural Development Cluster meeting of Regional Coordination Mechanism of the United Nations was held from 11-12 March in Midrand, South Africa. Operationalization of SPS programmes in Africa was one of the agenda items discussed.

1.6. DREA hosted the East Africa Sanitary/Phytosanitary (SPS) Team, comprised of US Government officials from the US Department of Agriculture, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the US Food and Drug Administration, at the AUC on 31 May 2013. The meeting discussed amongst others, important food safety issues including food inspection (both animal and plant), obstacles to safe food/water supplies, and major animal/plant diseases for Africa.

1.7. DREA has been at the forefront of the preparatory meeting for organizing the High Level Meeting of African Leaders on Approaches for Ending Hunger in Africa scheduled for June/July 2013. Making available nutritious and safe food will constitute the agenda discussion.

2 AU-IBAR SPS RELATED ACTIVITIES

2.1. ECOWAS co-organized with AU-IBAR on 28–29 March a regional coordination meeting of OIE delegates from member States to analyse proposed draft standards in the OIE Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes and to provide comments. This is the first regional meeting on common positions.

2.2. AU-IBAR held the 5th meeting of African OIE delegates 14-15 April 2013 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to build coordinated positions on animal health standards in preparation for the 81st OIE General Session 2013.

3 AU-IAPSC SPS RELATED ACTIVITIES

3.1. AU-IAPSC (African Union Interafrican Phytosanitary Council) coordinated the positions of African delegates on various items on the agenda of the 8th Session of the Commission for Phytosanitary Measures (CPM8). The positions were agreed upon during a meeting of Directors of Plant Health held in Uganda in March 2013.

3.2. AU-IAPSC is encouraging African NPPOs to participate in the 2013 call for topics by circulating the call to all of them for their submissions from 15 May to 31 August 2013. The African Plant Protection Organization is also ensuring that the topics meet the set CPM approved criteria. The drafting of the specifications is on-going.

3.3. Topics being solicited include the following:

- new topics for International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs);
- new components to existing ISPMs, such as supplements, annexes or appendices;
- revisions or amendments to adopted ISPMs, supplements, annexes, appendices or glossary terms;
- pests for which a new diagnostic protocol should be developed; and
- new topics for phytosanitary treatments.

3.4. AU-IAPSC is circulating the draft ISPMs due for substantial comment to NPPOs as the comment period is open from 1 June to 30 September 2013.

3.5. The following draft ISPMs are open for the substantial concerns commenting period (SCCP):

- 2006-003: Appendix to ISPM 12 on Electronic certification, information on standard XML schemes and exchange mechanisms;
- 2009-007: Establishment of fruit fly quarantine areas within a pest free area in the event of an outbreak; and
- 2006-031: Determination of host status of fruits and vegetables to fruit fly (Tephritidae) infestation.

3.6. AU-IAPSC is circulating the IPPC 2013 member consultation on draft specifications that started on 1 June and will end 31 July 2013.

3.7. The following draft specifications are open for commenting:

- 2009-002: Revision of ISPM 4:1995 Requirements for the establishment of pest free areas;
 - 2009-005: Revision of ISPM 8:1998 Determination of pest status in an area; and
 - 2008-008: Wood products and handicrafts made from raw wood.
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