



30 June 2014

(14-3750)

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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

**WTO SPS COMMITTEE MEETING
9–10 JULY 2014, GENEVA SWITZERLAND**

INFORMATION ON SPS ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN UNION

The following communication, received on 27 June 2014, is being circulated at the request of the African Union.

1 AU-DREA¹ SPS RELATED-ACTIVITIES

1.1. The African Union organized the Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries and Aquaculture at the African Union Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 28 April - 2 May 2014 as one of a series of events commemorating 2014 as the Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, and a critical part of a process building up to the planned June 2014 AU Summit of the Heads of State and Governments on the theme of the Year of Agriculture and Food Security: "Transforming Africa's Agriculture for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods through Harnessing Opportunities for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development".

1.2. The meeting was convened both to review progress on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) implementation and to develop goals, actions and targets aimed at achieving the overarching goal of accelerated growth and transformation, attaining food and nutrition security and poverty reduction on the continent over the next 10 years. The overall objectives of the meeting was to review progress on investment efforts impacting on production and productivity, access to markets (noting the role SPS plays on market access) and competitiveness, innovation, resilience, and investment finance, and their implications on the achievement of the overarching goal of attaining food and nutrition security and poverty reduction on the continent. Senior Officials and Experts deliberated in five work streams including one on "Harnessing markets and trade opportunities for transformation and shared prosperity". The meeting set a target to increase access to functioning markets and trade in a competitive agricultural sector; capturing the growing market opportunities and increase in the share of intra-African trade to at least 50% of the continent's total agro-food trade by 2025, within a continental free trade area (CFTA) supported by an effective external tariff scheme that strengthens regional preference in agri-food by 2019. The meeting recognized that while tariff barriers and quantitative restrictions have been eliminated in most RECS, non-tariff barriers still persist and seriously hamper inter and intra-regional trade of fish and fisheries products. The meeting proposed to enhance the coordination mechanism to promote African common positions on agriculture-related international trade negotiations and partnership agreements.

1.3. The African Union Commission (AUC) convened the African Agribusiness Forum on 22nd June 2014, at the margins of the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Africa Union Heads of State and Government Summit, of 20-27 June 2014, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The delegates of the forum discussed the opportunities and challenges of the African Agribusiness sector noting the need for compliance to global SPS measures and international standards.

¹ African Union - Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture.

1.4. The African Union and the European Union under the Joint Africa-EU Strategy in partnership with the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) jointly organized a training workshop on Geographic Indications in Botswana and Mozambique. The workshop focused on "Development and use of specific instruments to origin-based marketing tools in African-ACP countries". The workshop was attended by government officials from the agriculture domain and from the intellectual property domain, young leaders and innovators from the farming and the agricultural production sector; entrepreneurs and young leaders engaged in marketing of agricultural product on national, regional and international markets. The objectives were to: a) build specific expertise and capacity among key officials and stakeholders on protecting origin and geographical indications for local farmers and producers of agricultural products; b) create a network of practitioners within the country and across Africa with the knowledge on the subject of GIs; and c) identify and fast-forward protection of the geographical names of key national agricultural products that can benefit from protection on the local, national, regional and international markets.

2 AU-IAPSC SPS RELATED ACTIVITIES

2.1. AU-IAPSC (African Union Interafrican Phytosanitary Council) is ensuring provision of technical information sourcing (including plant species, plant pests and diseases etc.) and inputting into the Reference data of ARIS 2. This will provide quick reference to NPPOs in their routine work of technical clearance of imports/exports of plant and plant parts in international trade. A draft Brief has been completed and is in the process of being translated and published for circulation to NPPOs.

2.2. IAPSC together with the Regional Economic Communities/Member States (REC/MS) identified phytosanitary topics for regional standardization to address phytosanitary challenges on the continent. A call for topics was made and responses were received from SADC and The Gambia. IAPSC will send the selected and prioritized topic(s) to AU-IBAR under the PANSPSO programme for further advancement into development of a draft regional phytosanitary standard.

2.3. A document entitled *Use of Irradiation as a phytosanitary treatment: "The Case of South Africa; what can the rest of Africa learn from it"* is under preparation for publication and dissemination to member States. It is in line with the implementation of *ISPM 18:2003: Guidelines for the use of irradiation as a phytosanitary measure* and *ISPM 28:2007: Phytosanitary Procedure for regulated pests* and Adopted Annex 7 on Phytosanitary Treatment by target regulated articles (fruits and vegetables), targeting fruit flies of the family Tephritidae (generic). The publication is aimed at obtaining buy-in of irradiation as a phytosanitary treatment by decision makers in view of problems associated with chemical residues on fruits and vegetables and the ban on the use of methyl bromide in fumigation to kill pests.
