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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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PRIVATE STANDARDS

COMMUNICATION FROM NIGERIA

The following communication, received on 11 March 2015, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Nigeria.

1. Nigeria wishes to identify with all those who have shown concern with the use of private standards and indicate that from her experience they reduce the efficacy of the SPS regime by creating higher standards outside of government control. The private standards are arbitrary and end up penalizing developing countries and small farmers exporting to the developed countries since they lack capacity and funding.

2. In a bid to overcome the difficulties the private standards create for its small exporters, the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service under the auspices of the Minister of Agriculture invited MS Global GAP, a body that sets voluntary standards for the certification of agricultural products around the globe, to train staff of the Ministry along with quarantine officers.

3. At the end of the training programme, an evaluation was carried out on the success of the programme and the possibility of adopting Global GAP standards for Nigeria's fresh produce exports. It was identified that:

- Nigeria has the long term potentials;
- Nigeria has the favourable climatic factors; and
- Nigeria has the manpower to meet the challenges.

4. However, the process that will be put in place to meet the Global GAP certification is so elaborate and will require strict compliance at every level, else the whole system will be stalled. After the evaluation, the Global GAP standards, much as they are good, will be too tedious for a developing country like Nigeria to meet in the short run. On this note, it is pertinent to note that Nigeria has been exporting fresh vegetables to EU and UK markets through the Nigeria Agriculture Quarantine Service Good Agricultural Practice certification procedure. In order to monitor and control the private standards, the SPS Committee should expand its mandate to have to power to regulate the activities of private standards; otherwise the developing countries would continue to be denied opportunities to market their exportable products to where such private standards are imposed.
