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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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INFORMATION FROM THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

The following communication, received on 4 July 2015, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of the African Union Commission (AUC).

1 AUC SPS-RELATED ACTIVITIES

1.1. The African Union Commission (AUC) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) organized the 11th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development programme (CAADP) Partnership Platform meeting in March 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Partnership meeting was held under the theme, "Walking the Talk: Delivering on Malabo Commitments on Agriculture for Women Empowerment".

1.2. The last three CAADP Partnership Platform (CAADP PP) Meetings (2012, 2013 and 2014) were dedicated to appreciating the challenges and gains as well as learning from the experiences of CAADP in the first ten years of CAADP. It enabled partners to identify priorities, action areas and implementation strategies for CAADP in the 2nd decade (2015-2025) and beyond. The AU Summit of June 2014 (Malabo Declaration, 2014) gave renewed legitimacy to CAADP as Africa's policy framework for agriculture growth and transformation for shared prosperity. The 11th CAADP Partnership Platform - the first CAADP PP after the Malabo Declaration - was designed to help shape how the RESOLVE will be translated into action, results and impact. The PP aimed to build a shared understanding of country and regional needs and expectations of them for rolling out the Implementation Strategy and Road Map (which identifies action areas for "Boosting intra Africa" and international trade) including launching efforts to form technical partnerships to align with and support implementation.

1.3. Within the context of examining "THE HOW" and setting to "WALK-THE-TALK", the following sub-themes framed the 11th CAADP PP:

- Sub-theme 1: Walk the Talk: Ending Hunger by 2025;
- Sub-theme 2: Walk the talk: Inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation;
- Sub-theme 3: Walk the talk: Boosting Intra-African Trade;
- Sub-theme 4: Walk the talk: Building Resilience to Reduce Vulnerability; and
- Sub-theme 5: Walk the talk: Mutual Accountability to Actions, Results and Impacts.

1.4. The African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Commission (EC) held it 7th College to College meeting in April 2015 as part of the implementation structure of the Joint Africa EU Strategy (2014-2017). The objectives of the 7th College-to-College Meeting were to:

- Evaluate the challenges and perspectives of the cooperation between the two Commissions;
- Assess the status of implementation of the engagements taken by the two Commissions on joints issues;
- Identify the emergent challenges and build a consensus on the potential solutions;
- Share best practices of decision making and running meetings of the two organizations;
- Discuss how best to implement the Africa-EU Joint Strategy and its Road Map;
- Identify clear activities and actions for the year 2015 and beyond, Fostering operational links, stimulate joint strategic thinking and explore synergies between the joint action priorities; and

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- Consider consolidating the political, economic, social, technical and administrative cooperation of the two Commissions.

1.5. The outcomes of the 7th College to College meeting put sustainable agriculture at the forefront of cooperation between the two organizations. It endorsed the report of the Agriculture Contact Group on Agriculture, Food Security and Food Safety, particularly the commitment to prioritize Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) policy development and policy harmonization taking note of the steps taken by the African Union Commission to; harmonize trade policies, work towards a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), develop a continental SPS strategy and further put in place an African Food Safety Authority (AFSA). The African Union and the European Union intend to collaborate on a multi-step approach towards assisting setting up an AU Food Safety Management Coordination Mechanism, leading to the future establishment of an operational AFSA. To address the continuing need for training and capacity building in the sanitary and phytosanitary area, the "Better Training for Safer Food" (BTSF) programme was scheduled and undertaken in June 2015 focusing on food safety in Africa, showcasing how food hygiene can be mainstreamed into food law and can foster intra-regional trade.

1.6. The AUC SPS Focal Person carried out a technical consultation with four RECs (IGAD, EAC, SADC and COMESA). These consultations ranged from meeting with senior officials, officers handling SPS matters and attendance of regional SPS meeting. The objectives of the consultations were to:

- a. Discuss the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the continental SPS Committee which is key to guiding the work of the continental SPS committee:
 - i. Discuss with the RECs representative to the Continental SPS Committee and other officials handling SPS matters SPS related Ministerial and Heads of States decisions; and
 - ii. role of the continental SPS committee in leading and drafting SPS Annex for the CFTA protocol;
- b. Share with the RECs officers handling trade –related matters on the efforts of the DREA on the development of the continental Geographic Indicators (GIs) policy framework and identity areas of action; and
- c. Discuss with the RECs officials the development of the Continental SPS Strategy in view of the June 2014 AU Malabo Declaration on accelerated Africa Agriculture Growth and transformation.

1.7. The Assembly of the African Union in its Twenty-Fifth Ordinary Session of 14–15 June 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa launched negotiations for the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) (Doc. Assembly/AU/11(XXV)). The assembly alluded to its decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.394 (XVIII)) adopted in January 2012 Summit on the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area to be operationalized by an indicative date of 2017. The Heads of State and Government of the African Union emphasized their commitment to increase intra-African trade through the establishment of a CFTA that will foster economic growth, equitable development, and support integration through trade liberalization, industrialization and infrastructure development towards the full implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. The launch of the negotiations for the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area aimed at integrating Africa's markets in line with the objectives and principles enunciated in the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community.

1.8. The Partnership for Aflatoxin Programme in Africa (PACA) continued to roll out its country programmes in six pilot countries focusing on the following activities:

- Activity 1: Establishing the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System (AfricaAIMS);
- Activity 2: Supporting the Country-led Aflatoxin and food safety Situation Analysis and Action Planning (C-SAAP);
- Activity 3: Mainstream aflatoxin control through the PACA initiative in CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPs) in 2014 and in other relevant health and trade frameworks in the outer years.

2 AU-IAPSC SPS-RELATED ACTIVITIES

2.1. AU-IAPSC (African Union Interafrican Phytosanitary Council) organized its 9th Steering Committee and 26th Session of the General Assembly (GA) in Douala, Cameroon, 1-5 June, 2015. The 9th Steering Committee made recommendations that were submitted to the 26th General Assembly for review and adoption including those listed below:

- a. The GA adopted the IAPSC's strategic plan 2014-2023 and appreciated the role of FAO in availing the resources and technical support needed for the development of the plan;
- b. The GA urged IAPSC and DREA to take the necessary action for the plan to be presented and endorsed by the AU assembly and Heads of states and Governments;
- c. The General Assembly called upon International partners and United Nations agencies particularly FAO to support the initiative; and
- d. The general Assembly welcomed the proposal by CABI to assist IAPSC to develop Plant Health Information System and a taskforce to develop a project proposal was appointed.

3 AU-IBAR (AFRICAN UNION INTERBUREAU FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES)

3.1 SPS ACTIVITIES

3.1. African Union, with the technical assistance of the WTO, organised a workshop on the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement and on the improvement of the participation of African delegates in the meetings of the SPS Committee in Nairobi in December 2014. The workshop was conducted around two modules namely:

- a. Module 1 Objectives, on transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement;
- b. Module 2 objectives, on participation in the SPS Committee.

3.1.1 ANIMAL HEALTH

3.2. Meeting of African animal health experts to analyze and comment on OIE proposed changes to the Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes held in December 2014 for the meeting of the Codes Commissions in February 2015: A meeting on the same took place on 8 and 9 April 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya and enabled identification of animal health issues of common interest to African countries and proposition of coordinated positions.

3.3. The 7th Panafrican meeting of Chief Veterinary Officers on Africa's coordinated position on animal health standards was held in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2015 and it was aimed at preparing strategic attendance of African OIE Delegates to the 83rd Session of the World Assembly of OIE delegates in May 2015 in Paris, France.

3.1.2 FOOD SAFETY

3.4. From 11 to 13 February 2015, African food safety experts on contaminants in food and on food additives met in Nairobi to examine items of the agenda of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food for its 9th session, and on the Codex Committee on Food Additives for its 47th session.

3.5. From 16 to 18 March 2015, African food safety experts on pesticide residues and on residues of veterinary drugs in foods met in Nairobi to examine items of the agenda of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues for its 47th session, and on the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods for its 22nd session.

3.6. The meetings of food safety experts are to provide scientific advice to African Union member states in collaboration with the Coordinator of CCAfrica during their preparation of national positions. This is an effort of African Union to improve the effective participation of its MS in the work of the Codex.

3.7. AU-IBAR organized two Task Force meetings for the establishment of the Africa Food Safety Coordination Mechanism. The meetings have had representation from the European Union, UNIDO, FAO, and WTO/STDF amongst others.
