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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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ECOWAS IMPLEMENTED SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD OF DECEMBER 2019-JUNE 2020

COMMUNICATION FROM ECOWAS-USAID SENIOR SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) STANDARDS ADVISOR

The following communication, received on 9 June 2020, is being circulated at the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

1 INTRODUCTION

1. The USAID/West Africa Regional Mission works to support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to advance their vision to create an economic union and common market. In line with this objective, ECOWAS is implementing many agreements designed to support the free movement of goods and people throughout the region. Since 2017, SPS-related actions have been implemented.

2. In view of improving and strengthening SPS activities in the ECOWAS region, the following activities were implemented during the period of December 2019 - June 2020. It is to note that since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted on the smooth implementation.

2 PLANT HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION

2.1 Organizing the Third West Africa NNPO and Partners Taskforce annual meeting, 9-13 December 2019, Dakar, Senegal

3. The Third West Africa National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) and Partners Taskforce Annual Meeting and the Validation Workshop of the "Harmonized Phytosanitary Inspection and Decision-Making Guides" were jointly organized by USDA-FAS Washington, FAO and ECOWAS, in cooperation with the Directorate of Plant Health of Senegal. Representatives of 14 West African countries, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo attended the meeting. It was to note the attendance of technical and donor partners including UEMOA, CILSS, USDA, USAID, CABI and FAO.

4. The meeting aimed to:

- review West Africa NPPO and Partners Taskforce Action Plan progresses and challenges, address pending priorities, identify new key activities and validate a work plan for 2020 and beyond;
- review and validate the Harmonized "Phytosanitary Inspection and Decision-Making Guides".

5. The meeting made the following recommendations:

To the regional NPPO Taskforce

- to organize the pre-preparation meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in March 2020 (CPM15);

- to organize the next annual meeting in December 2020;
- to ensure that the representation of NPPOs at both meetings be consistent.

To FAO

- to support NPPOs in raising awareness of national authorities on the financial impact of damage caused by harmful organisms on crops in order to encourage them to provide substantial budget for their NPPO operations.

2.2 Preparation and organization of the third NPPO regional harmonization and common position of matter of interest tabled for discussion at CPM15 – February 2020 – Cotonou (postponed until further notice because of the global concern of COVID-19). It could be held later in the year 2020.

6. A team of experts (Dr Fall Cheikh, Ana Peralta and Dr Benoit Gnonlonfin) was established and has developed a draft common position document for consideration by NPPOs. The draft common position document was sent to NPPOs for comment. Those comments received are being considered and the draft common position document revised

3 FOOD SAFETY AND CAPACITY BUILDING: "DO RIGHT AND FEED EVERYONE SAFELY"

3.1 Participation in the commemoration of the 2nd World Food Safety Day, June 7, 2020: "Food Safety, Everyone's Business"

7. In commemoration of the Second World Food Safety Day (WFSD), the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) organized an online meeting on 5 June 2020 to raise awareness on food safety. The meeting was held under the sub-theme "**COVID-19 Pandemic and Food Safety – Building resilient national food control systems for consumer protection and safe trade**". The objective of the online meeting was to provide a platform for Competent Authorities in Africa responsible for food control to share information on impact, challenges, lessons in food control as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and identify best practices and mitigation measures for operating resilient national food control systems. The meeting was attended by 86 participants from 30 African countries, two RECs (ECOWAS and COMESA), AU-IBAR and African Development Bank. The meeting was hosted by AU-IBAR and was addressed by **Dr Kimutai Maritim**, CCAFRICA Coordinator and officially opened by **Prof. Ahmed Elsawalhy**, Director AU-IBAR.

8. Prior to the concluding remarks the meeting agreed to a COMMUNIQUE as a way forward. **Prof. Ahmed Elsawalhy**, Director of AU-IBAR concluded the online meeting by thanking all participants and partners as well as the organizing committee. He stressed the commitment of African Union in supporting food safety related issues for the benefits of the member States and the African population.

4 GENERAL CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

9. The ECOWAS Commission take this opportunity to thank USDA, USAID, FAO, African Development Bank (AfDB), AU-IBAR, CCAFRICA coordinating committee and all partners for their continuing support in advancing SPS related issues in the ECOWAS sub-region. Also want to call for more collaboration, support for future implementation, especially in the new era of COVID-19.
