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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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SADC SECRETARIAT REPORT ON SPS ACTIVITIES

SADC REPORT TO THE WTO COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

The following communication, received on 10 March 2021, is being circulated at the request of the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

1 BACKGROUND

1.1. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region consists of 16 member States namely Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The region has a population of 345 million people and therefore has a high responsibility to meet the international sustainable development goals for the betterment of the lives of the people through safe intra-SADC and international trade through the application of relevant international standards.

1.2. Plant pests and animal diseases can inadvertently be transported along with commodities thereby threatening the agricultural production and environment of the importing country. Food and feed may be contaminated with pesticide residues or other chemical toxins. To reduce these risks without unduly restricting regional or international trade in food and agro-products, the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Annex to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Trade allows SADC member States to adopt harmonized or scientifically justified SPS measures. This is in line with the implementation of the requirements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of SPS Measures, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).

2 UPDATES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPS ANNEX SADC PROTOCOL ON TRADE

2.1 SADC SPS Coordinating Committee

2.1. The SADC SPS Coordinating Committee is established by Article 14 of the SPS Annex on the SADC Protocol on Trade. The annual meeting of the SADC SPS Coordinating Committee held in March 2021 was attended by: SADC member States; the Southern Africa Sub-Regional Office of the Food and Agriculture Organisation; the Sub-Regional Office of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE); and CAB International. The meeting deliberated on reported SPS-related non-tariff barriers; the implementation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area; the African Continental Free Trade Area; and the implementation of regional activities of OIE and FAO aimed at facilitating safe trade.

2.2 Harmonization of SPS measures

2.2. The SADC secretariat, in collaboration with regional Centres of Excellence, is facilitating the development of harmonized pest management strategies focusing on fruit flies, Maize Lethal Necrosis Disease (MLND), Tomato Leaf minor (*Tuta absoluta*), Banana Fusarium Disease (Foc TR4) and Fall Armyworm (FAW). The following are the centres of excellence: Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique) – Fruit flies; Agriculture Research Council (South Africa) – MLND, FAW and Tomato Leaf minor; and Stellenbosch University (South Africa) – Foc TR4. The centres of excellence have conducted pest diagnostic training on the respective plant pests.

2.3. Furthermore, for animal health, SADC secretariat is working with two Centres of Excellence, CIRAD and University of Pretoria to review and update SADC regional animal disease management strategies and align them with global strategies. The prioritised diseases are Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR) and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The Centres of Excellence are also providing confirmatory diagnostic services for FMD, PPR and HPAI, and training of experts from member States, and facilitating accreditation of selected national diagnostic laboratories, countries will be facilitated to conduct national trainings on diagnostic skills.

2.3 Transparency

2.4. The SADC secretariat is in the process of developing a database for non-tariff measures (NTMs). It is often difficult and costly to find the NTMs of some member States whose trading partners might desire to access their market. Thus, the collection and classification of national NTMs into a database would provide an open and systematic source of information for trading partners. The database would give information on each SADC member State in terms of the product category, associated regulations and conformity assessment requirements. It would also help a member State to use this collection of information to formulate important national strategies that will assist them in measuring if they are meeting their obligations under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals as well as WTO SPS Agreement transparency provisions.

2.5. SADC secretariat urges member States to notify any changes in their SPS measures to enhance facilitation of safe cross border trade in food and agro-products.

2.4 Specific Trade Concerns

2.6. The SADC secretariat is facilitating resolution of online reported NTBs (<https://www.tradebarriers.org/about>). Currently there are three active SPS-related NTBs.

3 UPDATES ON SPS RELATED EU SUPPORTED PROGRAMMES

3.1 The SADC-EU Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP)

3.1. The programme focuses its attention on the SADC Protocols on Trade and Trade in Services to support implementation of the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The TFP addresses regional implementation issues in the areas of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures; Customs technical assistance support; and the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs). The Programme supports implementation of activities under these areas in order to improve free movement of goods within the SADC Free Trade Area while at the same time reducing the cost of doing business. It also ensures that goods from the SADC region are traded competitively in the global market. In the current financial year, the TFP has commissioned studies several activities which include the development of a regional database on TBT and SPS-related non-tariff measures; the prioritization of standards and technical regulation with the associated conformity assessment requirements for regional harmonization in the advent of the operationalization of the Africa Free Trade Area, as well as the investigation of the standards and conformity assessment needs along key SADC economic corridors. The training of small-scale farmers on SPS compliance and the capacity building of laboratory staff on the main conformity assessment standards will also be delivered to enhance the regional awareness of the global SPS requirements and to promote mutual acceptance of conformity assessment results between SADC member States.

3.2 Project on the Support Towards Operationalisation of the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (STOSAR)

3.2. The goal of STOSAR is to support implementation of the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy for improved production, productivity, competitiveness, food and nutrition security and agro-industry development. It is envisioned that meeting the objectives of this project will result in the development of trade opportunities and competitiveness of animals, animal products, plants and plant products in regional and international trade, as well as food and nutrition security in all member States in the SADC region. The STOSAR Project has also supported the development of regional pest and disease management strategies.

3.3 The SADC-EU Trade Related Facility (TRF)

3.3. The TRF aims to improve the participation of SADC member States in SADC regional integration activities in order to improve intra-SADC and international trade so as to contribute to sustainable development in the region. Currently 12 member States, namely Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, are implementing TRF activities on SPS issues, largely aimed at enhancing their policy and regulatory frameworks as well as developing requisite institutional and technical capacities to effectively implement the SPS measures which will ensure that imports and exports from the region meet the required quality standards.

3.4. The contribution of SADC member States to the sub-regional, Tripartite, Continental and international SPS agendas would greatly benefit from the formalization and adequate resourcing of national SPS committees, which is an area that still needs considerable attention and is highly prioritized.

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