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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 15 June 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, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the 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 Harmonization

2.1. In accordance with Article 6 (Harmonization) of the SPS Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade, SADC secretariat and member States participated in the virtual African Union (AU) Consultative Meeting on the Development of the Plant Health Strategy for Africa which was on 1-4 June 2021 and presented a joint common position with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Agriculture is central to the African economy, accounting for about 40 percent of Gross Domestic Product, 15 percent of exports and between 60 to 80 percent of employment on the continent. Development of the Plant Health Strategy will provide guidance and direction to the much-needed plant health efforts in mitigating emerging and re-emerging plant health threats and facilitating safe trade in food and agro-products.

2.2. The SADC secretariat and member States participated in the virtual African Union (AU) Consultative Meeting on the Development of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa which was on 8-11 June 2021 and presented a joint common position with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The Continental Food Safety Strategy will contribute to the operation of a science-based and efficient food regulatory environment, enhanced compliance leading to delivery of safer agri-food value chains across the continent, a reduced foodborne disease burden in Africa,

and improved competitiveness of Africa's food commodities for increased intra-African and global trade.

2.3. The SADC secretariat and member States participated in the 11th Meeting of the Tripartite Technical Working Group (TWG) on TBT-SPS-NTB organised by East African Community (EAC), COMESA and SADC. The meeting was held from 27-28 April 2021 via video conference. The objective of the meeting was to consider the draft working procedures and tools for the implementation of Annex IX on SPS and Annex VIII on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), outstanding matters in the Non-tariff Barriers (NTBs) Working Procedures and work programme for the Technical Working Group for 2021/2022.

2.2 Administration

2.4. The SADC secretariat participated in the 55th SADC Trade Negotiation Forum (TNF) held virtually on 17-19 May 2021. According to Article 14 (Administration) of the SPS Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade, member States are required to establish a National Committee on SPS Measures and appoint two representatives on the SADC SPS Coordinating Committee. The Secretariat reported to TNF that at the 11th meeting of the SADC SPS Coordinating Committee held in November 2019, in South Africa, only four member States namely, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe had confirmed that they had functional National SPS Coordinating Committees. TNF recommended that member States should, whilst using the proposed SADC National SPS Committee Model as a guide, utilise structures that are already existent at national level and formally appoint permanent members of the National SPS Committee and notify the SPS Committees and key SPS focal appointees to the TBT/SPS Unit of the SADC secretariat by 30 October 2021.

3 UPDATES ON SPS RELATED EU SUPPORTED PROGRAMMES

3.1 The SADC-EU Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP)

3.1. The Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP) 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: TBT and SPS measures; Customs technical assistance support; and the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs). During the period under review, the Programme facilitated a virtual regional training of trainers workshop for small-scale farmers on 10-21 May 2021. The purpose of the training was to enhance compliance to phytosanitary requirements for market access for agro-products. Furthermore, the Programme is also facilitating a virtual regional training workshop on General Testing/Calibration Laboratories and Inspection bodies in member States in the relevant Conformity Assessments Standards. The purpose of the training is to capacitate the conformity assessment personnel in SADC member States in order to improve their competence.

Report by: Mr. Chiluba Mwape
SADC Key Expert on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
