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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**ECOWAS IMPLEMENTED SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY ACTIVITIES
DURING THE PERIOD OF MARCH - JUNE 2021**

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

The following communication, received on 14 June 2021, is being circulated at the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The USAID/West Africa Regional Mission, USDA, Food and Agriculture Organization Subregional Office for West Africa (FAOSFW) and Food and Agriculture Organization Resilience Office for West Africa and the Sahel (FAOREOWA) work 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.

1.2. In view of improving and strengthening SPS activities in the ECOWAS region, the following activities were implemented during the period of March - June 2021. It is to note that since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic that is still with us, has impacted the smooth implementation of SPS-related activities at national and regional levels. As such, most planned SPS-related activities were postponed till further notice. However, certain activities were implemented, most of them in a virtual mode.

2 PLANT HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION

2.1 Planning the continuation of training workshop on the "Use of the Harmonized Phytosanitary Inspection and Decision-Making Guide"

2.1. Following several coordination meetings, the plan has now been approved for the continuation of the training workshop on "The Use of the Harmonized Phytosanitary Inspection and Decision-Making Guide". This is an effort of USDA-FAS dedicated to support West Africa NPPOs Taskforce to disseminate the harmonized Guide in order to promote best practices in the conduct of plant quarantine operations in the sub-region.

2.2. It is important to recall the program aims:

- to train in the pilot countries, including Benin and Nigeria, plant quarantine inspectors on a better understanding for further use of the Guide;
- simulation exercises with practical demonstrations of phytosanitary inspection including pest detection and identification at the laboratory;
- to test the applicability of the Guide.

2.3. Training will be conducted in Senegal, The Gambia, and Cabo Verde on 10-12 August, 25-27 August and September 2021, respectively. It is projected to train 15 inspectors per country. This initiative is in line with ECOWAS priorities and the implementation of the SPS framework to help

West African countries' plant quarantine systems meet international standards and to promote safe trade.

2.2 Capacity building of ECOWAS in the prevention, surveillance and control of the desert locust as well as the analysis of its impact on food and nutrition security in the Sahel in the context of COVID-19

2.4. A comprehensive regional programme on prevention, surveillance and control of the desert locust as well as the analysis of its impact on food and nutrition security in the Sahel in the context of COVID-19 was developed and is being supported by FAO through a technical cooperation programme TCP/SFW/3801. The countries involved are the nine member countries of the CILSS and ECOWAS including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. The impact of this project is to strengthen the operational and institutional capacity of ECOWAS in the preparation, prevention and control of the desert locust as well as the management of its impacts on food and nutrition security. In turn, supported countries are able to cope with and better manage the locust invasion and measure its impact on food and nutrition security. This project will be implemented from July 2020 - December 2021.

2.3 Participation in the inauguration of the Central and West African Virus Epidemiology Centre (WAVE) and high-level policy and technical dialogue on cassava viral diseases, 27-28 May 2021, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

2.5. We participated in the inauguration of the WAVE/CORAF regional centre and high-level policy and technical dialogue on cassava viral diseases held on 27-28 May 2021 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The infrastructure and laboratory facility were opened to the public. Also, the high-level policy and technical dialogue led to the development of a road map of actions to be implemented during the period of 2021-2025. The WAVE/CORAF project is implemented in 10 countries of Central and West Africa. The delegation of ECOWAS comprises of the Commissioner of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, Senior SPS Standards Advisor, Senior Surveillance, and Lead of SyRIMAO project.

2.4 Organization of IICA and ECOWAS coordination meeting for SPS Declaration for the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference

2.6. In collaboration with the United States and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), a virtual coordination meeting was organized on 20 May 2021. The meeting aimed at seeking more co-sponsors for the SPS Declaration for the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference contained in WTO document [G/SPS/GEN/1758/Rev.5](#) and action plan. During the coordination meeting the 15-ECOWAS member States expressed support/with to co-sponsor the SPS Declaration. An official message that serves as a notification was sent to the WTO SPS Secretariat for consideration with Cc to all ECOWAS countries' Geneva-based missions.

2.5 Regional training on the use of drones in desert locust control

2.7. The FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Regional (CLCPRO) attaches a particular attention to the introduction of innovative solutions aimed at further strengthening the effectiveness of desert locust control but above all at strengthening the operational capacities of the Western Region Intervention Force (FIRO). Thus, CLCPRO in collaboration with ECOWAS and its partners proceeded with the acquisition of 16 civilian drones for the benefit of its member countries as an innovative instrument in the monitoring of desert locust biotopes.

2.8. In this regard, the secretariat of the CLCPRO and the ECOWAS commission organized a regional training session on the use of these drones for the benefit of the focal points of its 10 member countries including front line countries (Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger) and invasion countries (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Senegal, Tunisia). The training session will run from 14-26 June 2021 in Nouakchott, Mauritania.

2.6 Participation in the virtual consultative meeting for the formulation of a continental plant health strategy for Africa, 1-4 June 2021

2.9. We participated in the virtual consultative meeting for the formulation of a continental plant health strategy for Africa held from 1-4 June 2021. The meeting was attended by more than 130 participants from regional economic communities (RECs), AUC technical institutions, private sector, academia, FAO, WHO, WTO, STDF, USDA, USAID, European Union, other donors and technical partners. There were fruitful discussions during the plenary and group work, and these yielded comprehensive outcomes that the hired consultant is compiling to draft the plant health strategy for Africa. Further consultations will follow to validate the strategy.

3 FOOD SAFETY

3.1 Participation and coordination for the Codex Alimentarius Committee meetings

3.1. There was participation and coordination for the 14th Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF14) meeting held from 3-13 May 2021. A number of standards were discussed and adopted by the Committee for advancement in the Codex step-wise process and final adoption by the Commission at its next meeting.

3.2 Participation in the events commemorating the 3rd World Food Safety Day 2021, organised virtually by the African Union Commission, 7 June 2021

3.2. The third World Food Safety Day was commemorated globally on 7 June 2021, under the theme 'Safe food today for a healthy tomorrow'. Whilst governments have focused mostly on food production and sufficiency to ensure availability of food to their populations, food safety, food quality and nutrition have, overall, been given lesser priority until recent years. Recognizing the impact unsafe food has on global development and the need to raise awareness on this complex issue, on 20 December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 7 June as World Food Safety Day (WFSD). It is also noteworthy that in 2020, the World Health Assembly further adopted a decision on strengthening efforts on food safety to reduce the burden of foodborne disease. It is in this regard that the African Union Commission Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment is organizing a virtual high level event on 6 June 2021 to commemorate World Food Safety Day and contribute to the global awareness and efforts to address the problem of unsafe food.

3.3. ECOWAS commission participated by providing and update on "the Implications of COVID-19 pandemic to food safety and regional trade in Africa: case study of West Africa and the Sahel". The awareness raising meeting was attended by over 100 participants from the African Union and its technical institutions, regional economic communities (RECs), AU-member States, ambassadors, parliamentarians, private sector, civil society, consumer associations, academia, donors and technical partners. A communique was issued at the end of the meeting as a roadmap of actions.

3.3 Participation in the virtual consultative meeting for the formulation of a continental food safety strategy for Africa, 8–11 June 2021

3.4. We participated in the virtual consultative meeting for the formulation of a continental food safety strategy for Africa held from 8-11 June 2021. The meeting was attended by over 128 participants from regional economic communities (RECs), African Union Commission technical institutions, private sector, academia, FAO, WHO, WTO, STDF, USDA, USAID, European Union, other donors and technical partners. There were fruitful discussions during the plenary and groups work and these yielded comprehensive outcomes that the hired consultant is compiling to draft the food safety strategy for Africa. Further consultations will follow to validate the strategy.

4 GENERAL CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

4.1. The ECOWAS Commission take this opportunity to thank all partners for their continuing support in advancing SPS related issues in the ECOWAS and Sahel sub-region, and to call for more collaboration, and support for future implementation, especially in the new era of and post COVID-19.
