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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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ECOWAS IMPLEMENTED SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD OF NOVEMBER 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022

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

The following communication, received on 7 February 2022, 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 November 2021 - February 2022. 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 technical and capacity building activities were implemented at national and regional levels, following the COVID-19 protocols.

2 PLANT HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION

2.1 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 National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) Taskforce to disseminate the harmonized Guide in order to promote best practices in the conduct of plant quarantine operations in the sub-region. The trainings were conducted on 14-16 December 2021 in Elubo, border with Ghana (step down training) and on 25-27 January 2022 in Banjul (The Gambia). Twenty (20) and fifteen (15) plant quarantine inspectors in Ghana and The Gambia, respectively, were trained and capacitated to duplicate the training and also applied it in their daily operations. There were:

- presentations and discussions on the provisions of the Guide related to phytosanitary inspection procedures for import and export;
- presentations of ISPMs 05, 07, 11, 12, 23, 31 and 32; and
- exercises with practical demonstrations of inspection, sampling, pest detection and identification and decision-making.

2.2. It is important to recall the programme aims at:

- training plant quarantine inspectors in the countries 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;
- testing the applicability of the Guide.

2.3. As of today, 125 plant quarantine inspectors have been trained in the region including countries of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Cabo Verde, Ghana, The Gambia and Nigeria. This initiative is in line with ECOWAS priorities through its agricultural development programme (ECOWAP 2025) and the implementation of the regional SPS framework to help West African countries' plant quarantine systems meet international standards and to promote safe trade.

2.2 Capacity building of plant quarantine inspectors on risk communication and pest risk analysis support tools and pest surveillance

2.4. Online training on risk communication was conducted for plant quarantine inspectors of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Twenty-four (24) technical staff of both countries were trained.

2.5. Also, there was a joint ECOWAS-CABI training on CABI Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) support tools for NPPOs in ECOWAS sub-region, on 13-17 December 2021. The key objectives were:

- to strengthen risk analysis skills in the ECOWAS member States;
- to highlight the notification process for new pests to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC);
- to train on the use of the CABI PRA & Horizon Scanning Tools and Crop Protection Compendium (CPC); and
- to share amongst ECOWAS member States any other best practices and relevant information with regards to PRA.

2.6. Thirty-one (31) competent authorities from 11 countries from the ECOWAS member States were trained.

2.7. Online training on pest surveillance was launched on 26 January 2022. About 124 participants from 11 ECOWAS member States are participating in this online course. At the end of this course (10 February 2022), there will be a debriefing meeting on 18 February 2022 to review and assess the success and challenges of this online training.

2.3 Coordination, monitoring and on boarding and implementation of the e-Phyto by ECOWAS member States

2.8. Since 7 December 2021 Senegal has completed the onboarding process and the first e-Phyto certificates were exchanged with EU member States. Senegal is now the second country, after Ghana, in the sub-region of the West Africa and Sahel. The e-Phyto certificates exchanged through the Hub of the IPPC are intended for France and the Netherlands and concern off-season horticultural products including cherry tomato and melon. Other trade partners of Senegal have been notified of this new development.

2.4 West Africa NPPOs and Partners' Taskforce annual meeting and preparation of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-16) meeting

2.9. The Regional West Africa NPPOs and Partners Taskforce meeting and preparation of the harmonized of common position for the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM16) meeting is being planned to be held on 7-11 March 2022, Cotonou (Benin). Participants are NPPOs from 15 ECOWAS member States, plus Chad and Mauritania, as well ECOWAS's regional partners.

3 FOOD SAFETY

3.1 Participation in the virtual forty-fourth session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting, 8 November – 14 December 2021

3.1. We participated in the virtual forty-fourth session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting and also coordinated member States' position on matters of interest discussed during the meeting.

4 GENERAL CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

4.1. The ECOWAS Commission takes this opportunity to thank all partners for their continued 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.
