



## **SADC SECRETARIAT REPORT ON SPS ACTIVITIES**

### **SADC REPORT TO THE WTO COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

The following communication, received on 24 May 2022, 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 TO THE SADC PROTOCOL ON TRADE**

##### **2.1 Harmonization**

2.1. The SADC secretariat in collaboration with the SADC Business Council with support from the German Development Cooperation programme "Cooperation for the Enhancement of SADC Regional Economic Integration (CESARE)" commissioned a study on the Harmonisation of Biosafety Regulations affecting Trade of Processed Agricultural Products with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in February 2022. The focus of the study was to assess the regulation of processed agricultural products that are genetically modified and to provide insights into the implications on trade across SADC member States. A validation workshop for the study report was held on 20 May 2022.

2.2. The SADC secretariat participated in an expert workshop convened by the African Union (AU) to explore options, receive input, and draw experiences and lessons for the development of a Food Safety Information and Knowledge Management System for Africa. The workshop was held in Douala, Cameroun from 9–11 May 2022. The outputs of the workshop included: Better understanding of the data needs, data availability and data sources for improving food safety management in Africa and recommendations for needed improvements; Better understanding of existing data and information management systems and recommendations for needed

improvements; Identification of mechanisms for linkages and inter-operability identified for databases/systems; and Identification of approaches for improving food safety data and information exchange.

2.3. The SADC secretariat participated in the Continental Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee meeting held in Douala, Cameroun. The meeting was held from 12–13 May 2022. The objectives of the meeting were to: Receive updates from continental and regional institutions on their SPS interventions and develop an SPS program matrix for monitoring SPS work in Africa; Receive inputs on the upcoming work on the Africa SPS Index and its mainstreaming into the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Biennial Review Process; Provide updates on recent AU Policy Organ Decisions related to SPS and follow up actions; and Review the Terms of references of the Committee, including membership of the continental SPS Committee to align with emerging issues.

2.4. The SADC secretariat participated in the Technical E-Meeting for the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Countries held on 6 April 2022. The meeting organised by COLEACP focused on the latest amendments to European Union (EU) plant health rules affecting capsicum, eggplants, tomatoes, citrus - applicable from 11 April 2022. The meeting discussed these changes and their implications for National Plant Protection Organisations and private operators in the relevant value chains.

2.5. The SADC secretariat organized a Virtual Regional Plant Protection Technical Committee (SPPTC) Meeting in preparation of the Commission of Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) Session which was scheduled for 5, 7 and 21 April 2022. The preparatory meeting was held on 15-16 March 2022.

### **3 UPDATES ON EU SUPPORTED TRADE FACILITATION PROGRAMME**

#### **3.1 The SADC-EU Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP)**

3.1. The Trade Facilitation 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: TBT and SPS measures; Customs technical assistance support; and the EU-SADC EPAs.

3.2. During the period under review, the following short-term assignments have been implemented under the Programme:

##### **3.1.1 Identification of Standards and Conformity Assessment needs for selected Value-Chains**

3.3. The assignment focused on finding the key standards, technical regulations, SPS measures and their associated conformity assessment procedures along the value-chains of the following specified products: Grains – wheat and rice; Oil seeds and Legumes – sunflower and cotton seed; and poultry. Report on the findings is yet to be validated.

##### **3.1.2 Development of Regional Mechanisms and Guidelines for Conformity Assessment Bodies working in the area of intra-regional trade**

3.4. The regional mechanisms and guidelines will play a useful role to ensure that a conformity assessment procedure undertaken in any of SADC Member States follows the exact principles and practice of other SADC countries. This is important, as business operators will be in position to expedite the exportation process, minimise cost related to reassessment in the importing member States and therefore, align to the SADC Protocol on Trade objectives as well as with the relevant international agreements. The Regional Mechanisms and Guidelines are yet to be validated by member States.

##### **3.1.3 Development of a framework for mutual recognition of the certificates of compliance issued by the competent national authorities across member States**

3.5. The framework for mutual recognition of certificates will specify general principles and conditions under which each member State will accept or recognize the certificates of compliance issued by the competent authority of the trading partner. This will eliminate the need for multiple

testing, inspection and certification of food or feed commodities in the exporting member State and re-testing in the importing member State. The framework will also help to build necessary confidence in the official inspection and certification system of an exporting member State by accepting that the product or process referred to in the certificate conforms to the import requirements. The framework is yet to be validated by member States.

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