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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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ECOWAS IMPLEMENTED SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD OF JULY - OCTOBER 2022

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

The following communication, received on 8 October 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 July – October 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, since countries have started lifting some of the travel restrictions, 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. It is important to recall that this in-country training should be conducted in all 15 ECOWAS member States plus Chad and Mauritania. 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 complemented by USAID West Africa Office 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. Training was conducted in Lome, Togo from 27-30 September 2022, bringing the total number of trained phytosanitary inspectors to 213 for the entire region. The key sessions were about:

- 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;
- exercises with practical demonstrations of inspection, sampling, pest detection and identification and decision-making; and
- field visit to the seaport of Lome.

2.2. Also, it is important to recall the programme aims at:

- training in the countries, 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;
- testing the applicability of the Guide.

2.2 Regional training of technicians on data entry, analysis, and simulation for fruit fly management using the ECOWAS data wizard and decision support system (DSS), Accra, Ghana, 3-7 October 2022

2.3. A regional training on the above specific technical area was organized by the ECOWAS Commission through its funding support from the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) and the European Union (EU) to build technical capacity at national and regional levels. Therefore, this regional training session was organized and brought together technicians from The Gambia and Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger and Sierra Leone. This is in line with the objective of the Regional Innovative Fruit Fly Control System in West Africa (SyRIMAO) project.

3 FOOD SAFETY

3.1 Organization of the 1st regional meeting for establishing an ECOWAS food safety regulatory convergence forum

3.1. As announced in the June 2022 report, the first regional meeting for establishing an ECOWAS food safety regulatory convergence forum was implemented from 18 to 22 July 2022 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Participants are Codex contact points, OIE focal points and other CVOs, National Plant Protection Organizations, WTO-SPS focal points, experts, private sector representatives, regional organizations and partners.

3.2. This regional food safety regulatory convergence forum aims

- at enhancing, reaching optimum coordination of food safety measures among countries, to provide improved guidance and enhanced coordination for conformity assessments and food inspection regimes;
- to achieve a high level of coordination with systematic prioritization of food standards development based on their amenability to being more easily harmonized at regional level, using a scientific rationale.

3.3. The food safety regulatory convergence agreed on the following priority sub-committees:

- Contaminants;
- Food additives;
- Pesticides and residues of veterinary drugs;
- Microbiological criteria and food hygiene.

3.4. Further the regional convergence also agreed on an action plan that contains 38 activities spanning across the above priority sub-committees. Follow up actions on consultation and engagement with partners are ongoing in order to mobilize resources for its implementation.

4 PARTICIPATION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

4.1 Sensitization and roadshow in Sanve-Condji (Togo) on good practices in road transport and cross-border trade (31 August to 3 September 2022)

4.1. Custom and Agriculture Directorates, ECOWAS Commission in collaboration with the West Africa Association for Cross-Border Trade in Agro-Forestry-Pastoral, Fisheries Products and Food (WACTAF) organized a roadshow with the objective to raise awareness of the authorities and the various stakeholders (mainly private actors) of cross-border trade in order to reduce or eliminate obstacles/harassments to trade in agro-pastoral products. Participants were traders, exporters, transporters, government of Togo officials, representatives of WACTAF, representatives of national

transport facilitation, representative of CILSS, Representative of ECOWAS, police officers, customs officers, military, immigration officers. Among other things were discussed:

- good practices to facilitate cross-border trade in term of conformity to the transport logistics, documents, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures including:
 - o mandatory documents to have (which an inspector must examine to verify the identity and integrity of the goods):
 - phytosanitary certificate/veterinary certificate;
 - customs declaration;
 - identity of the goods (nature, packaging) ;
 - quantities;
 - exporter (Name, ID, Full address);
 - o means of transport and the people on board must have their up-to-date documents;
 - o consignment verification: inspect for identity to ensure that the consignment is accurately described by its documents;
 - o integrity check to verify if the consignment, quantity and status is as declared in the phytosanitary certificate received or to be issued;
 - o conduct physical examination of the consignment to confirm the identity and integrity;
 - o noting that the phytosanitary certificate or veterinary certificate is the priority document needed to facilitate the entire process for documents check to facilitate cross-border trade.

4.2 Participation in the first International Plant Health Conference and Technical Committee of Regional Plant Protection Organization, London, United Kingdom, 20-24 September 2022

4.2. During this week we participated in these meetings as indicated above. During the discussion at the Technical Committee meeting of the Regional Plant Protection Organization, ECOWAS's request to IPPC to be recognized as the 11th Regional Plant Protection organization (RPPO) of the IPPC (granted to be recognized as the 11th RPPO of IPPC) was also highlighted. Follow up actions and consultations are being implemented to make progress on this regional agenda.

5 GENERAL CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

5.1. The ECOWAS Commission takes 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, technical assistance and support for future implementation.
