



## SADC SECRETARIAT REPORT ON SPS ACTIVITIES

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

The following communication, received on 13 June 2023, 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. To reduce the risks associated with the movement food and agro-products without unduly restricting regional or international trade, 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 (WOAH) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).

#### 2 UPDATES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPS ANNEX TO THE SADC PROTOCOL ON TRADE

##### 2.1 SADC SPS Coordinating Committee

2.1. The SADC SPS Coordinating Committee is established by Article 14 of the SPS Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade. However, this body has not met physically in the last four years due, in part, to the travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and funding constraints. The body is mandated under the SPS Annex to the SADC Trade protocol to report on SPS-related non-tariff barriers; the implementation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area; the African Continental Free Trade Area; and the implementation of regional activities of WOA and FAO aimed at facilitating safe trade.

##### 2.2 Transparency

2.2. The SADC secretariat is in the process of developing a database for non-tariff measures (NTMs). It is often difficult and costly to find the NTMs of some member States whose trading partners might desire to access their market. Thus, the collection and classification of national NTMs into a database would provide an open and systematic source of information for trading partners. The database would give information on each SADC member State in terms of the product category, associated regulations and conformity assessment requirements. It would also help a member State to use this collection of information to formulate important national strategies that will assist them

in measuring if they are meeting their obligations under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals as well as WTO SPS Agreement transparency provisions.

2.3. The SADC secretariat is facilitating resolution of online reported NTBs and the establishment and capacity development of National Focal Points (NFPs) is being supported as part of the development programmes mentioned in 3.1. below.

(<https://www.tradebarriers.org/about>). Currently there are no active SPS-related NTBs.

### **3 UPDATES ON SPS-RELATED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

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

3.1. The TFP addresses regional implementation issues in the areas of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures; Customs technical assistance support; and the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs). The Programme supports implementation of activities under these areas in order to improve free movement of goods within the SADC Free Trade Area while at the same time reducing the cost of doing business. It also ensures that goods from the SADC region are traded competitively in the global market. In the current financial year, the TFP has commissioned studies and several activities which include: the development of a regional database on TBT and SPS-related non-tariff measures; the prioritization of standards and technical regulation with the associated conformity assessment requirements for regional harmonization in the advent of the operationalization of the Africa Free Trade Area; the investigation of the standards and conformity assessment needs along key SADC economic corridors (notably work on Fisheries and Aquaculture related standards and regulations); the training of small-scale farmers on SPS compliance to food safety, plant protections, and animal health related measures; training on the identification, monitoring and resolving of non-tariff barriers to trade (NTBs) and the establishment of national focal points and information centres in all SADC member States. Work was also well advanced in the development of good regulatory practice with particular focus on SPS measures by developing capacity in regulatory impact assessment and developing a common, systematic approach to the development of necessary non-tariff measures to achieve regulatory objectives and a systematic approach to measuring and monitoring these measures to prevent them from becoming unintended barriers to trade.

#### **3.2 The SADC Seed Centre**

3.2. The USAID supported seed centre established a common Harmonised Seed Regulatory System (HSRS) providing standards for the registration and certification of seed varieties in the region; a seed certification and quality assurance scheme and common quarantine and phytosanitary measures for seed in the region. Through these mechanisms, it is possible to improve plant protection against pest infestations, reduce the impact of fake or sub-standard seed, and improve the quality of crops and yields. Eleven of the sixteen SADC member States are members of the centre and the remaining five States are in the process of joining. The SADC Seed Variety Catalogue now has 96 improved seed varieties registered with several seed varieties registered in different economically important crops – providing opportunities for cross border trade in safe and reliable seed and giving growers options to respond to climatic variability thereby improving resilience to the threats of climate change and enhancing food security. (<https://www.sadcseedcentre.com>)

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