



SADC SECRETARIAT REPORT ON SPS ACTIVITIES

SADC REPORT TO THE WTO COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

The following communication, received on 27 February 2024, 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 390 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 encourages 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 five 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. The SADC secretariat together with the African Union hosted a meeting of the Food Safety Subcommittee of the SADC SPS Coordinating Committee, convened in Lusaka, Zambia in October 2023 to continue the coordination work in the field of food safety. The meeting was attended by representatives of food safety focal points and the private sector in 13 of the 16 SADC member States.

2.2 Transparency

2.3. 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 system was successfully piloted in five SADC member States in 2023 with further refinements including the integration with other sources of data related to the capturing of non-tariff measures included. Full implementation of the system is planned for later in 2024.

2.4. In October 2023, a situational analysis of the current status of the National Notification Authorities (NNAs) and National Enquiry Points (NEPs) for both SPS and TBT obligations in all SADC member States was commissioned. Revised best practice guidelines are being produced and training for the responsible personnel is planned for March 2024.

2.5. 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 unresolved SPS-related NTBs.

3 UPDATES ON SPS-RELATED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

3.1 Plant protection activities

3.1. A regional training on the general management of the two banana diseases that threaten the regional food security and trade from 5-9 June 2023, Johannesburg, South Africa. The training also necessitated the development of national contingency plans to manage the plant pests and diseases. The training was conducted in collaboration with FAO and African Union Inter-Phytosanitary Council. The training was conducted from 17-21 July 2023 to all SADC member States on pest risk analysis in Lusaka, Zambia in collaboration with CABI.

3.2 The SADC-EU Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP)

3.2. 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 last six months, the TFP has commissioned successfully concluded studies and several short-term activities of interest to SPS matters, which include:

- the training of small-scale farmers and farmer organizations on SPS compliance to Food safety related measures in which some 60 farmers from 14 SADC member States were trained; training of medium and small enterprises and business development organizations on standards and technical regulations that are applicable to their products and that could impact on the trade in these products in the region; work was also well advanced in the development of good regulatory practice with particular focus on a scientific approach to developing SPS measures by developing capacity in risk assessment, with training being planned in February 2024. The work builds on previous guidance developed on a systematic approach to measuring and monitoring SPS measures to prevent them from becoming unintended barriers to trade; guidance on a common approach to the recognition of food safety certificates issued related to food products in the SADC region and traded between member States was developed in 2021 and validated after some revision in 2023 taking into account interviews with authorities at points of entry at several border posts in the region. The revised guidance will be used as the basis of a training workshop for food safety competent authorities in late February 2024.

3.3. Under the TFP several new initiatives were developed and implemented under the programme and many opportunities for further assistance in reducing the impediments to trade through better alignment and the resolution of differences in measures and associated standards, the application of the standards and the recognition of the results of conformity assessment related to those standards were identified. Some of these activities are earmarked for implementation in the next few months, funding permitting, or will be transferred to successor programmes of the SADC EU TFP. Such activities include the recommendations for the revision of the SPS annex to the SADC protocol on trade with particular attention to the cooperation structures and the possible resolution of disputes related to SPS-related measures; support for the continued functioning of transparency-

related structures and functions in member States to ensure accurate and current information related to all commonly traded commodities; and, the provision, maintenance, population, and publicity of central information resources at SADC to support food safety, animal health and plant protection while at the same time reducing unnecessary barriers to trade.

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