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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 2023 – FEBRUARY 2024**

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

The following communication, received on 25 February 2024, is being circulated at the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its partners work to implement and address SPS-related issues at regional level that contribute to the 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.

1.2. In view of improving and strengthening SPS activities in the ECOWAS and Sahel region, the following activities were implemented during the period of November 2023 - February 2024.

## **2 PLANT HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION**

### **2.1 Seventh West Africa and Sahel National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) and Partners' Taskforce annual meeting & Preparation of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-18) meeting, Accra, Ghana, 19 to 23 February 2024**

2.1. The Regional West Africa NPPOs and Partners Taskforce was established in August 2017 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso as a consultation framework to address phytosanitary related issues in the region. Since then, a regional action plan has been validated and implemented. In this framework, regular annual meetings have been organized to identify and address NPPOs priorities as well as annual Pre-CPM meetings to build consensus among countries on harmonized common positions to be presented at the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM/IPPC), feeding into continental consolidated and harmonized position. Therefore, it has become necessary to sustain this important regional coordination, consultation and harmonization mechanism as a statutory regional meeting for decision-making and information sharing instrument for a takeover of the region's priorities by the NPPOs.

2.2. The meeting aims to review West Africa and Sahel NPPOs Taskforce priorities, discuss major plant health and SPS trade issues, and prepare for West Africa and Sahel Member countries' common positions to build, to address the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-18) agenda to be held from 15 to 19 April 2024, Rome, Italy. The key outcomes:

- Major plant health and SPS trade issues in the region are shared and discussed;
- Regional NPPOs Taskforces and partners action plan is reviewed and 2024 priority activities defined;
- Common subjects and positions to defend during the CPM-18 meeting are discussed and recommendations adopted and the lead as well as alternate countries to present the adopted harmonized common position identified.

2.3. Noting the effective participation of NPPOs and partners, a regional 2024 action plan of plant health issues is validated as well as the harmonized common position document on matters of interest for CPM18.

### **3 FOOD SAFETY**

#### **3.1 ECOWAS participation in the 46<sup>th</sup> Commission of the Codex Alimentarius (CAC46) for adoption of different food safety standards, 27 November to 3 December 2023, Rome, Italy**

3.1. Participation in the CAC46 with coordination of the member States was implemented during the CAC46. Fifteen member countries participated in the CAC46 and contributed to the adoption of a number of standards. More information can be found in the CAC46 report (REP23/CAC, <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/committees/cac/meetings/en/>).

#### **3.2 Second coordination meeting of the regional food safety regulatory convergence and food safety network meeting: information and capacity building on emerging SPS-related issues, from 26-28 February, 2024 in Accra, Ghana**

3.2. With the launch of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTFA), the time has come for Africa regions and Regional Economic Committees, to review their trade technical and regulatory instruments to prepare for their alignment to this important continental initiative. Such effort aims to take this opportunity to re-engage regional coordination initiatives to build countries' capacities and boost intra/inter-regional and international trade and also taking into consideration the value chain approach including that covered by the Food Security and Resilience Programme (FSRP) project.

3.3. In this framework, ECOWAS has put in place in 2022 a regional food safety regulatory convergence and food safety network to revitalize the lethargic existing network of West Africa food safety actors. Thus, the statutes of the network were validated as well the mechanism for convergence of food safety regulatory measures amongst ECOWAS and Sahel countries. Also, during the convergence meeting, member countries agreed on a scope of the food safety coordination mechanism and have identified and validated a list of common food safety priorities for the region and a roadmap for actions in relation to Codex and SPS-related work in the region. Hence, the food safety priorities include Contaminants in Food, Pesticides Residues and Veterinary Drugs Residues, Microbiological Criteria and Food Hygiene and Food Additives. Because of the cross-cutting nature of food safety matters, this regional convergence is established to improve, strengthen regional coordination, information sharing, cooperation and collaboration, planning, resource mobilization across sectors and projects.

3.4. So far, during the reporting period, many activities have been initiated based on the recommendations adopted during the July 2022 regional meeting, including:

- The development and validation of a harmonized risk-based sanitary inspection and decision-making guide, 4–6 October 2023, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire;
- The organization of the regional experts meeting to develop a technical and funding mobilization campaign document on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) 24–28 July 2023, Abidjan – Côte d'Ivoire;
- The regional meeting on data generation for Codex work and establishment of three technical regional committees, 28-30 August 2023, Lomé, Togo; and
- The review and compilation of the approved and used food additives.

3.5. The objectives of the 2<sup>nd</sup> food safety regulatory convergence meeting are to:

- review the level of implementation of priority food safety recommendations for the region;
- identify capacity building needs;
- discuss emerging SPS related matters and food safety issues that pose a significant impact on the expansion of the trade in the region;
- Share international best practices for the coordination and management of food safety matters; and
- Validate a strategy and work plan/road map of actions for 2024 and beyond.

#### **4 GENERAL CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD**

4.1. 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.

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