

INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE (ITC)

Statement at the Meeting of 22 to 24 June 2009

The following communication, received on 22 June 2009, is being circulated at the request of the ITC.

I. PUBLICATIONS

1. ITC and PTB (the German National Metrology Institute) will jointly develop the second edition of the ITC publication on "Export Quality Management Book: An answer book for small-medium sized exporters". The current edition of the book has questions and answers related to the following: Technical regulations and standards, Product certification, Testing, Metrology, Quality management, ISO 9000, Other management systems, Accreditation, WTO, and ITC. The questions and answers directly related to SPS issues are rather limited. The second edition of the book will increase the number of questions and answers dealing with SPS issues and will include questions and answers dealing, *inter alia*, with SPS measures, ISO 22000 and private standards. The book is scheduled to be published next year.

II. EXPORT QUALITY BULLETINS

2. The ITC bulletin EQ 84 "Exporting Seafood to EU" is being translated into Arabic under a joint publication agreement between the Yemeni Seafood Exporters Association (YSEA, the implementing agency of STDF project 69) and INFOSAMAK. The bulletin, due to be published in September 2009, will be distributed to Competent Authorities and exporters in the Arab region.

III. PROJECTS

A. BANGLADESH QUALITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME

3. ITC continues its activities in Bangladesh to strengthen national capacity to design and implement sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures in accordance with the relevant WTO rights and obligations.

1. ISO 22000

4. The direct assistance to implement Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) based on ISO 22000 in six agro-processed food enterprises and hands-on training of six trainers-cum-counsellors on ISO 22000 is ongoing. Review of the ISO 22000 documentation in the six enterprises and final recommendations to improve the FSMS will be provided in the first half of August 2009 together with

a three-day workshop on "Implementing Food Safety Management Systems – ISO 22000" to be conducted by the trained local Trainers-cum-Counsellors.

2. Study tour in Thailand (TBT and SPS)

5. A study tour was conducted for five participants from Bangladesh from 30 March to 4 April in Thailand. The study tour provided on-the-job training on actual operations, and management techniques of SPS/TBT National Enquiry Points and also included visits to private bodies. The knowledge obtained in the study tour will facilitate the implementation of the action plans for TBT and SPS, especially the transparency provisions related to information retrieval and dissemination.

3. Study Tour in Thailand on the value chain in the horticulture and agro-processing sectors

6. A study tour for twelve participants from Bangladesh, *inter alia*, from enterprises and exporters associations, is scheduled to take place in Thailand from 21 to 27 June 2009. The objective of the tour is to build awareness and capacity of exporters and potential exporters to have a comprehensive understanding of the value chain ensuring product quality, availability, consistency, compliance with market requirements and reduction of post-harvest losses. Exporters from Bangladesh will learn from the successful horticulture exporters in Thailand and be provided with a best practice model that can be adapted and improved to successfully compete in the targeted markets. The Study Tour will be followed by a specific training workshop and advisory services to improve compliance of Bangladeshi horticulture products with market requirements along the value chain.

4. Workshops on "The WTO/SPS Agreement: A Business Perspective", conducted by local trainers

7. The local trainers, who are customizing the generic ITC training material on "The WTO SPS Agreement: A Business Perspective" to take into account the specific situation in Bangladesh and the specific needs related to fisheries and horticulture and agro-processing, will be conducting the following workshops¹:

- One two-day SPS workshop on Fisheries in Chittagong (Q3 2009)
- One two-day SPS workshop on Fisheries in Khulna (Q3 2009)
- One two-day SPS workshop for Horticulture/Agro Processing in Chittagong (Q3 2009)

B. STDF 69 PROJECT: "IMPROVED CAPACITY FOR ENSURING THE QUALITY AND SAFETY OF YEMENI SEAFOOD PRODUCTS"

8. ITC continues its close supervisory assistance to the Yemeni Seafood Exporting Association (YSEA). The third progress report and project status report have been submitted to WTO on 16 February 2009. An extension of the duration of the project until December 2009 has been approved by the last STDF WG to enable YSEA to deliver the most practicable and effective outputs that can be executed in the Yemeni Fishery Sector.

9. A Workshop on "Developing an Integrated SPS and Marketing Strategy for the Fisheries Sector in Yemen" was organized on 22 March 09 under the patronage of H.E. Prime Minister and with the support of the Ministry of Fish Wealth (MFW). The workshop, attended by more than 60 participants, concluded with a very active and lively discussion among participants on the

¹ These workshops, previously planned to take place in the second quarter of 2009, have been postponed to enhance better preparation of the training material.

workshop's recommendations that showed an urgent need to strengthen the dialogue between stakeholders through the establishment of a Technical Council with subcommittees for taking action and addressing technical issues faced by the sector such as quality and compliance with food safety requirements.

10. YSEA participated in the 2009 European Seafood Exposition (ESE), from 28 to 30 April, in Brussels. YSEA, with the support of ITC, successfully coordinated the participation of the association itself and three exporters. The participation helped to establish contacts with potential buyers and reconfirm the commitment of the private sector in Yemen to supply seafood products that are in compliance with international market requirements. The participation has helped in starting collaboration with the Vietnamese Seafood Exporters Association (VASEP).

11. YSEA has attended the Vietnamese Seafood Exposition, Vietfish, in June 2009. Thanks to this participation, YSEA and VASEP are currently developing an MoU aimed at enhancing collaboration in the areas of training, technological cooperation, the development of investigations, and technological transfer, for the benefit of both institutions and societies.

C. CENTRAL ASIA (KYRGYZSTAN AND TAJIKISTAN)

12. The projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are now coming to an end. The assistance provided in the area of food safety management has been successfully completed by the recent certification of two enterprises in the agro-processing sector to ISO 22000 by a foreign certification body, a member of the International Accreditation Forum, in both countries. This was the first time enterprises in these countries have been certified to ISO 22000. Several national consultants were trained in both countries by an ITC international consultant and have been equipped to carry out advisory services in food safety management on their own, thus ensuring sustainability.

D. BENIN

13. A workshop will be organized in July to inform stakeholders in the cashew nut sector about issues related, to operations management, quality and packaging. This will be followed by advisory visits to a selected number of enterprises. A second workshop is scheduled in the third quarter of this year, after follow-up visits have been conducted in these enterprises.

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