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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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INFORMATION FROM THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

The following communication, received on 3rd October 2015, is being circulated at the request of the African Union Commission (AUC).

1 AUC SPS RELATED-ACTIVITIES

1.1. The African Union Commission (AUC) organized the Inaugural Conference of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment from 5-9 October, 2015. The STC reviewed the relevant strategic goals, facilitate mutual accountability and identify synergies, linkages and complementarities in on-going agriculture, rural development, water and environment related initiatives, and their implications on the achievement of the overarching goals of Africa Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation (3AGT) agenda for attaining food and nutrition security, reduce poverty, boost intra-African trade, and enhance resilience of production systems and livelihoods to climate change and related shocks. The Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Livestock and Fisheries considered a total of 32 documents for endorsement and implementation and 12 of these were directly aimed at facilitating trade.

1.2. The African Union Commission (AUC) and UNCTAD organized a training workshop on Trade in Services for CFTA negotiators (English) from 24-28 August 2015 in Nairobi-Kenya. The aimed at enhancing the capacity of the African CFTA negotiator to have a common understanding of critical terminologies and operating principles governing trade in services in preparation of the CFTA negotiation starting in April 2016.

1.3. The African Union Commission (AUC) facilitated the development of the Continental Agribusiness Strategy. The strategy outlines mechanisms of mobilizing different partners including the AU, RECs, member States, farmer organizations, private sector, development partners and other actors around a set of high priority strategies designed to support the growth of a robust and inclusive private sector-led African agribusiness. When implemented, the strategy will provide significant impetus in contributing to the goals outlined in the Malabo Declaration, including boosting intra-African trade. Whereas the strategic thrusts identified by the continental agribusiness strategy will be the foundation for vibrant agribusiness and agritrade promotion in Africa, the strategy builds on existing initiatives at continental, regional and national levels. Further, the continental agribusiness strategy seeks to improve coordination, mobilization, advocacy, and communication among various actors in the agribusiness landscape in Africa by proposing key institutional developments.

1.4. The African Union Commission through the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), a consortium coordinating aflatoxin mitigation and management across health, agriculture and trade sectors in Africa continued to provide consistent coordination and coherent leadership to the continental efforts on aflatoxin control. The AUC through the PACA Secretariat directly supports governments to achieve large scale change in aflatoxin control in Africa. It also forges strong partnerships and works jointly with RECs, private sector and other key stakeholders to improve governments' effectiveness. Amongst other activities implemented in this period, PACA convened the regional workshop on "Revamping the Groundnut Value Chain in West Africa through aflatoxin Mitigation" 1-2 September 2015, Dakar Senegal.

1.5. The European Commission, in partnership with African Union Commission, the ACP Secretariat, the European Investment Bank and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) organized a conference on Agri-Business Investments in partnership with farmer organisations in ACP countries, 14-15 October 2015. The aim of the conference is to engage stakeholders and partners to work on a common blue print for smart agri-business investments in ACP Countries in partnership with farmers' organisations. The event will build on examples of agri-business investments, and development in Africa; success stories and lessons learnt on gaining access to regional and international markets for farmer organisations in ACP countries among others. The results of the conference will guide European Union and AUC future activities in this area.

2 AU-IAPSC SPS RELATED ACTIVITIES

2.1. The AU-IAPSC (African Union Interafrican Phytosanitary Council) provided technical backstopping in prioritizing the capacity building areas under the Australia – Africa Plant Biosecurity Programme. 16 African experts will be trained in Australia in different areas of plant biosecurity.

3 AU-IBAR (AFRICAN UNION INTERBUREAU FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES)

3.1. African Union Commission and its technical office IBAR have supported the training to improve the quality and effectiveness of participation of African member States in the activities of the WTO SPS Committee. The specific training objectives were to:

- Improve communication and circulation of information between relevant national stakeholders within African countries prior to the regular meetings of the WTO SPS Committee;
 - Improve communication and circulation of information between African countries before the regular meetings of the WTO SPS Committee;
 - Identify potential Specific Trade Concerns that could be raised by African countries or against African countries (by third countries), and prepare coordinated action by/support to the African countries involved; and
 - Harmonize/coordinate the submission of information to the SPS Committee made by countries, RECs and the AU.
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