



INFORMATION ON SPS ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

The following submission, received on 4 July 2018, is being circulated at the request of the African Union.

INTRODUCTION

The African Union Commission Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture is responsible for coordinating continent-wide initiatives in agriculture, fisheries, food and nutrition security, strengthening the resilience of African food production systems, facilitating harmonization of agricultural and knowledge support systems policies, mobilizing resources to address implementation of priority issues in the continent and advocacy for implementation of priority programmes in Africa.

The Fall Armyworm (FAW) is currently one of the biggest problems to agriculture and food security in Africa. It feeds on most important staple crops including maize, rice, sorghum, millet, sugarcane, vegetable crops and cotton. It is officially reported in over 44 countries in Africa. FAW is therefore a setback to the Africa's agenda of ending hunger, boosting intra Africa and enhancing resilience of production systems to various vulnerabilities and risks. Since its outbreak, the Commission had undertaken the following:

1. Organized a Press Conference to brief the AU member states Permanent Representative and the AU Security Council in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
2. Organized a special session on Fall Armyworm during the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment. During that ministerial meeting of the STC, the framework for the management of FAW was adopted for use by different stakeholders, including updating of the National Agricultural Investment Plans.
3. The Executive Council considered the challenges FAW presents to the continent during the AU Summit of January 2018. There is a proposal to establish an emergency fund for FAW.
4. In October 2017, the Commission and FAO signed a Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) on reinforcement of plant health governance in Africa through coordinated management of the Fall Armyworm. The project was officially launched in April 2018 and it will address; inadequate availability of early warning systems in many African countries; rampant pest outbreaks that make farmers rely heavily on the use of agrochemicals with its related economic and environmental costs; limited competitiveness of Africa's agricultural produce in the regional and global trade due to increased use of pesticides and related risk of pesticide residue; and the high probability of pest introduction in new areas with the relatively weak national plant protection and quarantine services due to increased trade and mobility of people.
5. The commission led the delegation of African ministers to a FAW study tour in Brazil in March 2018.

6. The Commission led by the Inter Africa Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized a special session on fall armyworm to create and enhance awareness on the spread and effect of FAW in Africa during the 14th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Partnership Platform (CAADP-PP) meeting held in Libreville, Gabon in April 2018.
 7. The Commission also organized a special session to launch the Continental Strategy for the Geographic Indications in Africa during the 14th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Partnership Platform (CAADP-PP) meeting held in Libreville, Gabon in April 2018. Implementation of the strategy will promote protection of unique African commodities and make them more competitive on the global market.
 8. The African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-BAR) organized the 10th Pan African Chief Veterinary Officers and Animal Health Expert meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. Common Positions on draft OIE Chapters were developed and presented during the 86th General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates in May 2018, in Paris, France.
 9. AU-IBAR is leading the development of an Animal Health Strategy for Africa. This strategic document will promote continental coordination of all animal health programmes and activities undertaken within Africa to control animal diseases.
 10. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (ACDC) and AU-IBAR in collaboration with other AU technical institutions are leading the development of an African-wide Antimicrobial Resistance Framework. The objective of this work is to ensure the mitigation and containment of the threat of antimicrobial resistance on a continental level.
 11. AU-IBAR, the African Union Pan-African Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC) in collaboration with partners (FAO and OIE) are leading effort to eradicate "Peste des Petits Ruminants" (PPR) from Africa. Twenty seven African Union member states have been supported to develop their national PPR eradication strategies. Other specific support being given to AU member countries include:
 - i. Strengthening national animal disease surveillance systems;
 - ii. Strengthening of laboratory diagnostic capacities;
 - iii. Enhancing PPR vaccine production laboratories capacities and quality assurance processes;
 - iv. Supporting epidemiological surveillance and laboratory net-works at national, regional and pan-African levels.
 12. AU-IBAR organized Pan African expert meetings to support AU member states to prepare national positions on draft Codex standards for eight different Codex committees from October 2017 to April 2018. The 9th Pan African National Codex Contact Point Officers meeting was organized in May 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya to prepare Common Positions on draft Codex standards for the 41st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission organized from 2 to 6 July 2018 in Rome, Italy.
 13. AU-IBAR continues to coordinate electronic forum discussions on SPS issues prior to sessions of the WTO SPS Committee and also support the physical participation of African Union member states in the work of the Committee.
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