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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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## **OUTLOOK ON ECOWAS IMPLEMENTED SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD OF AUGUST – OCTOBER 2018**

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

The following communication, received on 2 October 2018, is being circulated at the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The USAID/West Africa Regional Mission works to support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to advance their 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. In standards, a USAID/West Africa: Cost Reimbursement Implementation Letter no 2 was signed between CILSS and USAID/West Africa. It is through this agreement focus will be on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards.

1.2. With reference to the approved 2018-2019 work plan and in view of improving and strengthening SPS activities in the ECOWAS region the following activities were implemented during the period of August-October 2018.

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

2.1. The recent introduction of the fall armyworm (FAW) as well as the discovery of the new alien invasive pest identified in West Africa and its growing threat to agriculture and food security have caused much concern in about 44 countries in the sub-Saharan region including 15 West African countries. The FAW is a crop-destroying worm and can cause high damage to maize, rice, sorghum, vegetables. These attributes have made the control of FAW a challenging task. There have been efforts to sensitize, build capacity for the pest identification, knowledge sharing and a study tour. Overall, development of management options has mobilized international experts and the national capacities of affected countries and raised general attention to caterpillar attacks on various crops.

#### **2.1 Joint monitoring mission FAO-ECOWAS-CILSS from August to October 2018**

2.2. It is in this line that a joint monitoring mission was initiated between FAO-ECOWAS-CILSS to visit five countries including Togo, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Cabo Verde in West Africa. The overall objective of this monitoring mission is to make available to FAO relevant information that can be used to make rapid arrangements to anticipate risks to food security and thus to inform preparedness and response interventions. Specifically, the mission will have to:

- Closely monitor through the regular provision (once or twice a month) of information on FAW while following all the countries in the region in order to keep the situation under control;
- Conduct assessment/awareness of country office and government capacity in terms of data collection, coordination and response;
- Update prevalence information;

- Train extension officers on the use of Fall Armyworm Monitoring and Early Warning System (FAMEWS);
- Develop/update dashboards;
- Evaluate the situation and propose a plan for impact assessment;
- Propose strategic actions to be implemented in the short term (October 2018 - September 2019).

### 2.3. Key findings were:

- The prevalence rate of FAW remains high; however, the damage is limited in some farms due to treatment (20 to 100% depending on the localities);
- In general, in all the visited countries, the losses are huge and the economic and social consequences are important;
- Sensitization/dissemination of information and practices remains limited;
- Few resources have been allocated to research, which is essential for sustainable FAW control. Even the few research actions carried out have not yet identified the effective molecules for FAW control;
- The use of pesticides is generally uncontrolled and constitutes a real public health concern;
- There are still no Farmer Field Schools (FFS) (except Burkina Faso), crucial for a sustainable integrated fight;
- There is no reliable monitoring mechanism and therefore the information is not consistent, which poses a real problem of coordination of activities at the national level;
- The mapping of stakeholders involved in FAW management is not yet done and the coordination remains weak;
- The national task force is not yet formalized in most of visited countries and no road maps have been drawn and this makes the implementation of actions difficult;
- FAW control seems not to be a government priority in most visited countries;
- The ongoing activities are mainly supported by FAO-TCP, therefore they cannot be sustainable without additional funding;
- Extension services are desperately short of resources for the implementation of their activities, including the monitoring of producers as well as the difficulties in disseminating information on the ground.

### 2.4. Following the above findings, the subsequent recommendations were made:

- Mapping all the actors involved in the FAW control;
- Formalize the national task force and develop its roadmap including its actions plan and budget, building the capacity of its members;
- Advocate with decision makers for prioritizing FAW control and for research funding;
- Immediate replication/dissemination of FAMEWS training at the decentralized level and supply of trained staff with equipment needed for real-time monitoring and transmission of the collected information;
- Strengthen communication and awareness-raising actions on FAW at all levels, including the dissemination of training and information on increased surveillance, the use of local best practices etc.;
- Strengthen/establish as appropriate FFS on FAW;
- Develop a research plan on FAW in the short, medium and long term;
- Intensify the awareness campaign for the controlled and even limited use of pesticides (use of authorized pesticides) and facilitate producers' access to approved pesticides and biopesticides;
- Undertake the impact assessment that can support advocacy messages and fund raising.

### 2.5. Next steps:

- Conduct a regional refresher training, experience sharing and feedback for the technical cooperation programme (TCP) focal point and the country contact person for the proper management of FAW and best practices;
- Conduct impact assessment of FAW management and development of the dashboard in the pilot countries including Burkina Faso and Guinea;
- Ensure a regional meeting for the coordination of research actions;
- Establish a network or information sharing platform within countries;
- Establish an internal coordination committee for follow-up actions with countries and subsequent action plan to be developed;
- Carry out aggressive actions for resources mobilization.

## **2.2 Regional training workshop on improving monitoring of FAW risk, prevalence and impact at country level: Experiences, options and ways forward; Lusaka, Zambia from 18-21 September 2018**

2.6. This workshop has been convened as part of the effort to make progress against these current challenges. It is designed to encourage sharing of experiences, and to expose participants to new tools and ideas from inside and outside the region. Participants were Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) member countries including Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Republic Democratic of Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Eswatini, Kenya, FAO, CILSS, ECOWAS. The ultimate objective of the workshop is for country participants to develop draft country actions plans which address the challenges in the 2018/2019 growing season. The specific objectives were:

- To share ideas and experiences on FAW monitoring tools in use at country level;
- To expose FAW country focal points to key FAW being used by / promoted by FAO and gain feedback on suitability for use in differing country contexts;
- To develop draft action plans for implementation of the tools at country level during the upcoming 2018-19 season.

2.7. Outcomes:

- Ideas and experiences on FAW monitoring in Eastern, Southern and Western Africa shared;
- Experiences on monitoring tools in use at country level shared;
- Extension officers trained on FAMEWS;
- Draft country action plans for the implementation and use of the FAMEWS tool (data collection) developed.

## **3 FOOD SAFETY AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

### **3.1 Food safety standards harmonization discussion and training on US Food Safety Modernization Act**

3.1. The US Government and the African Partner States signed a Cooperation Agreement on Trade Facilitation, Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). The objective of the cooperation agreement is to increase exports, expand investment, create jobs and stimulate economic growth through improved cooperation on trade facilitation, SPS and TBT measures. Article 2 of the cooperation agreement focuses on enhancing the technical capacity in the African Partner States (West Africa, EAC, et al.) for the consistent implementation of science-based SPS measures, including promoting greater use of and compliance with international standards, guidelines, and recommendations, as well as good regulatory practices. Furthermore, in June 2015, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was renewed/extended for ten years, from 2015 to 2025. In this regard, key value chains will be prioritized for trade policy and business support in consultation with national government entities, civil society and the private sector, in order to take advantage of opportunities offered under AGOA. Private sector enterprises interested in accessing US markets need to be appraised on the food safety standards requirements, including pesticide residues, food safety trade standards, and provisions of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

3.2. Harmonization and training workshops were organized from 16-25 August, in Accra, Ghana. Participants were food safety officers, policy-makers, key competent authorities and private sector representative from ECOWAS member States. The objectives were:

- To inform government ministries and private sector entities on the importance of practical food safety measures and their effect on compliance with international trade standards, especially in reference to US market access;
- To begin a dialogue between the public and private sector that can inform national action planning to meet SPS and food safety standards and facilitate trade (SPS and food safety harmonization discussion);
- To provide an opportunity for participants to establish a network of food safety experts, including FSMA experts on which they may call after the workshop conclusion;
- To train qualified individuals to take FSPCA lead instructor training that will allow the impact of these first workshops to multiply to additional preventive controls training.

### 3.3. Outcomes:

- Competent authorities, food safety actors, private sector from ECOWAS member States sensitized on the importance of practical measures and effect of compliance with international trade standards;
- Food safety standards harmonization discussion initiated and network established within the ECOWAS sub-region;
- ECOWAS regional SPS action plan 2019-2021 developed (output 1: Governance: SPS activities at national level strengthened; output 2: Raising awareness and engaging regulators, private sector actors, academia on SPS issues; output 3: Regional harmonized SPS regulations domesticated at national level; output 4: Needed a priority list of commodities/issues within each category of plant health, animal health and food safety; output 5: Resource mobilization);
- 31 qualified individual preventive controls and 17 lead instructors trained.

### **3.2 Regional training workshop of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) member States Codex Contact Points on how to submit robust applications to Codex Trust Fund 2, Round 3; Johannesburg, South Africa, 26-28 September 2018**

3.4. The SPS Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade, recognizes the Importance of establishing and maintaining confidence in the sanitary and phytosanitary measures of SADC member States among agencies that apply measures to protect human or animal or plant life or health, businesses, and consumers in SADC member States and in existing and potential third-party markets. The Annex states that for food safety, the standards, guidelines and recommendations established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) relating to food additives, veterinary drug and pesticide residues, contaminants, methods of analysis and sampling, and codes and guidelines of hygienic practice shall hold. The Annex further states that the SADC secretariat shall, in consultation with the SADC Sanitary and Phytosanitary Coordinating Committee, facilitate resource mobilization for technical assistance to enhance member States' capacity to implement and monitor sanitary and phytosanitary measures, including promoting greater use of international standards. In this regard, the Codex Alimentarius Commission coordinates amongst other things, the Codex Trust Fund (CTF-2) to which member States can apply to get assistance to strengthen their national Codex committees and activities. The national Codex Contact Points have the responsibility to ensure that international food safety standards and guidelines are adopted and adapted to national systems in order to ensure the consumption of safe food, nationally and regionally. The SADC SPS committee consists of three sub-committees, namely for Plant Protection, for Animal Health and for Food safety.

3.5. Several of the SADC member States have attempted, individually, to access this fund but to no avail. The reason for failure could be attributed to poorly stated proposals as well as weak project proposal structures. In view of addressing this challenge, and as a follow up to a request by the SADC secretariat, a capacity building training workshop was organized and facilitated by the ECOWAS-USAID Senior SPS advisor. The objective was to train Codex Contact Points on how to build robust applications for submission to Codex Trust Fund 2, Round 3. Participants were Codex Contact Points from 12 SADC member States including Botswana, Comoros, Republic Democratic of Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

### 3.6. Outcomes:

- Experience shared by Ghana Codex Contact Point on how the country went about the application process for Codex Trust Fund 2, Round 1 and achievement so far following implementation;
- 12 draft diagnostic tools developed (national food safety assessment);
- 12 individual draft applications developed (available) awaiting further national consultation and finalization before submission to the Codex Trust Fund by 30 November 2018.

#### **4 ATTENDANCE AT REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL SPS FORA**

4.1. The ECOWAS Commission were represented at regional and international meetings including:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference for Food Safety and Security 2018, Pretoria, South Africa, 15-17 October 2018: Keynote Guest Speaker oral presentation "*Harmonization and application of SPS regulations and standards to facilitate trade and ensuring consumer health protection: Challenges and perspectives in the developing world*";
- Mycotoxin training workshop at the University of Johannesburg, 18-19 October 2018: Keynote Guest Speaker oral presentation "*Awareness training on International Standards Settings Bodies with emphasis on Codex Alimentarius Commission*".

#### **5 CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD**

5.1. The ECOWAS Commission take this opportunity to thank USAID Regional office, West Africa, USDA, European Union, AU-IBAR, SADC, EAC and all partners and donors for their continuing support in advancing SPS issues in the ECOWAS region and beyond. The ECOWAS Commission also want to call for more collaboration, support for future implementation of actions to better address SPS matters in the region.

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