



15 March 2019

(19-1610)

Page: 1/3

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

INFORMATION ON SPS ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

The following submission, received on 13 March 2019, is being circulated at the request of the African Union.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) activities at the African Union Commission have been driven from the Agriculture front on the need to safeguard human, animal or plant life or health and from the Trade front on the need to eliminate non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to trade arising from the implementation of SPS measures. The African Union Commission supports at various levels, SPS initiatives and work at the national and Regional Economic Community (REC) level.

2 AGRICULTURE

2.1. Cognizant of the challenges and opportunities of agriculture and its positive contribution to economic transformation on the African Continent, African Union (AU) leaders adopted the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) in the Maputo Declaration in 2003. CAADP remains Africa's policy framework for agriculture and agriculture-led development and was specially formulated to stimulate the necessary reforms in the agriculture sector and bring agriculture to bear on the socio-economic growth and sustainable development.

2.2. Central to the success of Africa's agricultural development strategies is the ability of member States to meet Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards for both the assurance of food safety, plant and animal life or health, as well as market access. Amongst the seven Malabo thematic areas of performance commitment was 'Boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services'.

3 FIRST INTRA AFRICA TRADE FAIR

3.1. Held in Egypt, Cairo in December 2018, it was an opportunity to engage with all stakeholders, in particular the private sector, civil society and consumers on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and other issues that are critical to boosting intra-African trade. The Trade Fair featured a conference segment that included panel sessions on understanding policies and legal frameworks for Intra African and international Trade facilitation. These sessions covered issues related to boosting intra Africa trade and the strategies for coordinating stakeholders on Africa's engagement in the multilateral trading system, including WTO negotiations, as well as trading arrangements with key trading partners such as the EU (EPAs), US (AGOA) and others. The sessions also included discussions on "Intra-African trade finance and payment systems", which is a critical component of trade in services and other Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) clusters. There were high level panel discussions on Building Africa's Manufacturing Capacities on the shoulders of SMEs and a training programme on how to export, targeting SMEs, all of which will contribute to the domestication and implementation of the Africa's SME strategy. The Africa Union provided booth managers and staff to handle inquiries in the AU pavilion that featured policy and trade promotion materials.

4 THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA AND THE AFRICA SPS COMMITTEE

4.1. The main aim of the Continental SPS Committee is to guide the coordination and implementation of SPS matters at the continental level. The specific task of the Continental SPS Committee would be to promote mainstreaming of SPS issues (food safety, plant and animal health) into CAADP implementation and other agriculture, trade-related, health and environmental initiatives and frameworks. In this regard, the tasks of the Continental SPS Committee will include:

- Capacity development;
- Coordination and harmonization;
- Policy guidance and advocacy.

4.2. This week, the Committee met on 20 March 2019 to:

- Discuss the development of the AU Continental SPS policy framework;
- Unpack the priorities in the AfCFTA Annex on SPS;
- Provide insights into an Africa Food Safety Agency; and
- To share key lessons and best practices.

5 THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY CONFERENCE

5.1. The first FAO/WHO/AU International Food Safety Conference was hosted by the African Union in Addis Ababa Ethiopia from 12 to 13 February 2019. The conference was attended by over 700 delegates including Government leaders, senior policy makers, and representatives from international organizations, civil society and the private sector. The objective of the conference was to identify key actions and strategies to address current and future challenges to food safety globally; and to strengthen commitment at the highest political level to scale up food safety in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The conference was opened by the Chairperson of the African Union Moussa Faki Mahamat. The Directors General of FAO, WHO and WTO were also present.

5.2. The Conference highlighted the following:

- The need to strengthen efforts on raising awareness on food safety at all levels, improving knowledge on food safety management practices in the food industry and consumer empowerment must be relentless;
- The need for sustainable investment in modern and effective national food control systems and building human capacities to improve regulatory control and compliance with food safety requirements;
- Focusing efforts on strengthening cooperation and smart partnerships in order to utilize the synergies that are afforded by the sharing of experiences and resources;
- And the need for more commitment for dedicated funding for training, research and technology transfer to support food safety management interventions.

5.1 ANIMAL HEALTH STRATEGY FOR AFRICA AND SPS AWARENESS CREATION

5.3. In November 2018, the African Union launched the Animal Health Strategy for Africa. The Strategy harmonizes already existing animal health agendas, commitments, frameworks, tools and guidelines for a more coordinated approach to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of animal health delivery systems in Africa.

5.4. The 7th experience sharing workshop on Sanitary Regulations and Enforcement was jointly held by the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources and the Pan African Parliament (PAP) from 27 to 29 September 2018 in Banjul, Republic of The Gambia. The workshop articulated the oversight role of members of the Pan African Parliament and other Parliamentarians on SPS issues and their tracking using monitoring and evaluation system.

5.2 ENHANCING PARTICIPATION OF AU MEMBER STATES IN THE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARD SETTING ORGANIZATION

- Coordinated AU member States to develop African common positions on draft Chapters of the terrestrial animal health code and aquatic animal health code to the OIE Commission meetings held in February 2019;

- Coordinated development of common positions on food hygiene and antimicrobial resistance for the Codex sessions on food hygiene and antimicrobial resistance held in November and December 2019 respectively.

6 COORDINATING FALL ARMYWORM MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

6.1. The voracious fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*), first formally reported in Africa in January 2016, has since been reported in 44 countries in February 2018. It is a pest that poses a serious threat to the food security and livelihoods of millions of African smallholders and their families. The pest also poses a serious threat to the achievement of goals that African countries have committed to in the CAADP Malabo Declaration of halving poverty by 2025 and the 2030 agenda of Sustainable Development Goals. Africa needs a strong and a coordinated response for effective action to address the outbreak of fall armyworm.

6.2. From 11-13 March, the Commission and FAO organized a training session to strengthen the capacity of AU member States to improve their national surveillance system and integrated pest management.

6.3. The African Union, during the special workshop held on 18 March 2019, outlined its coordinative role in FAW management.
