

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STDF WORKING GROUP MEETING**11-12 October 2012****WTO, Geneva****1. Adoption of Agenda**

1. The meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chair of the STDF Working Group, Mr Lars Børresen, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Norway to the WTO. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the current Chair, Hugo Cameron, had recently moved back to Canada for professional reasons.

2. The agenda was adopted with three amendments: (i) project STDF/PG/328 was added under agenda item 5(c) to request for an extension; (ii) project preparation grant STDF/PPG/370 was added under agenda item 4(c) to request additional time for contracting; and (iii) the presentation by COLEACP (agenda item 3(g)(v)) to be conducted immediately following agenda item 2. The list of participants is provided in **Annex 1**.

2. Operation of the Facility**(a) Selection of vice-chairperson of the Working Group**

3. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the current vice-chairperson of the Working Group, Mr Lars Børresen from Norway, would become the chairperson in 2013. The Secretariat welcomed expressions of interest from members for the position of vice-chairperson of the Working Group in 2013 (and hence chairperson in 2014). A decision on this matter would be taken at the next meeting in March 2013.

(b) STDF Policy Committee

4. In June 2012, members agreed on a tentative date (7 December 2012) for the next Policy Committee meeting. The Secretariat noted that at this time there were no specific issues that required a decision from the Policy Committee. The Working Group agreed not to hold a Policy Committee meeting this year. However, a meeting in 2013 would be opportune to discuss the results of the mid-term review of the STDF. The Secretariat reminded donor members to agree on three representatives in the Policy Committee for the period 2012-2013. To date, the Secretariat had received an expression of interest from Japan, while the EU had confirmed its willingness to serve another term (unless other candidates would come forward).

(c) STDF Work Plan for 2013

5. The Secretariat introduced the draft STDF Work Plan for 2013 and highlighted the following planned activities: (i) research, an event and publication on linkages between SPS and trade facilitation; (ii) a study to measure the impact of export-oriented food safety projects and programmes on the domestic health situation in developing countries; (iii) continued work on Multi Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA); (iv) preparation for new film material in 2014; and (v) continued work on (on-line) information dissemination (website, Virtual Library, project factsheets and e-newsletter). The Secretariat also noted that at least two external evaluations of completed STDF projects would be conducted in 2013.

6. The FAO and IPPC felt that the concept note on the linkages between SPS and trade facilitation did not give sufficient weight to legitimate SPS trade-restricting measures and suggested that certain sections in the note be revised be redrafted. The developing country expert from Belize supported this. The Secretariat suggested discussing this further under agenda item 3(d).

7. The Secretariat also explained that discussions had taken place with Canada and the SPS, TBT, and Aid-for-Trade units in the WTO about organizing a seminar in Geneva on standards in the first half of 2013. Canada was requested by a group of Ambassadors to work with other WTO members in organizing such a seminar. Consultations are still on-going among Members. As appropriate, conclusions and recommendations would be disseminated at the next global Aid-for-Trade Review in 2013. The STDF would seek to be actively involved in this initiative.

8. The Secretariat noted that it would welcome additional comments on the draft Work Plan in the coming two weeks (i.e. by 26 October 2012). The revised - final - Work Plan, balancing and incorporating the various comments received during and after the Working Group meeting, would then be circulated.

(d) Mid-term review of the Facility

9. In January 2012, the Policy Committee agreed to replace the external evaluation, originally scheduled for 2012, with a "lighter" mid-term review, which would be useful to assess progress in implementation of the new Medium Term Strategy and review the Facility's funding and staffing levels. The Secretariat noted that it will prepare and circulate draft terms of reference to Working Group members by mid-December for comments and suggestions. Meanwhile, the Secretariat invited members to suggest possible candidates for the review. The aim is to hire the consultant before the March 2013 Working Group meeting in order for the consultant to observe this meeting and schedule face-to-face meetings.

(e) Financial situation

10. The Secretariat reported on the financial situation of the Facility and commented on the information and figures in the annotated agenda (STDF/WG/Oct12/Annotated agenda). The financial situation of the STDF is currently good and there seems to be continued interest among several donors to contribute to the STDF. However, additional contributions will be necessary to implement the Work Plan 2013.

11. The IPPC suggested that the Secretariat should perhaps look into revising its review process of PGs and PPGs and create a first filter that would solely look at the technical aspects of the proposal, to then be followed by a detailed revision of the budget, logical framework, etc. The FAO supported this intervention and noted that it would like to engage partners to explore more efficient approaches for the review process. The developing country expert from Sudan noted that more should be done at the country level to improve the quality of the applications that are submitted.

12. The Secretariat welcomed these interventions and reminded the Working Group that its review template had recently been improved. Further suggestions to revise the review process could be raised as part of the planned mid-term review.

Agenda item: 3 (g) (ii) - Presentation of COLEACP

13. COLEACP made a presentation on three of its programs: PIP, EDES and PAEPARD. COLEACP's members include growers and exporters in ACP countries and European importers of fresh horticulture produce. PAEPARD is a platform to coordinate agricultural research and development between Africa and European countries. PIP is a technical assistance programme for the ACP horticultural industry that has been running since 2001 and deals primarily with food safety regulatory and market requirements. EDES has the same overall objective as PIP but targets the public sector in trying to properly structure food safety systems. This programme is led by COLEACP and it works with a consortium comprising various French, Danish and UK technical agencies.

14. COLEACP also presented their PIP-EDES training system which uses a cascade training framework that encompasses developing materials, methods and tools, training ACP master trainers, using these master trainers to deliver collective training courses, and supporting in-house training which targets middle-management (production and pack house managers). In terms of recent success stories in applying this approach, COLEACP highlighted interventions in Kenya, Tanzania and Senegal. Staff time for master trainers as well as local costs and travel are not covered by COLEACP. COLEACP also noted that it is investing in online training, which is freely accessible to people in ACP countries.

15. COLEACP explained that EDES projects are requested by countries and are evaluated by the economic weight and export profile of a sector in that particular country, the number of people involved, and the small-scale nature of the production. For the PIP project, it is a demand-driven process where companies approach COLEACP.

16. Participants highly appreciated COLEACP's presentation and asked several questions. The Secretariat clarified that the presentation will be made available on the STDF website after the meeting (http://www.standardsfacility.org/Files/DocsWG/COLEACP_Oct-12.pdf).

3. Enhanced collaboration in SPS-related technical cooperation (output 1)

(a) Follow-up to STDF seminar on international trade and IAS (12-13 July 2012)

17. The Secretariat briefed the Working Group on the outcomes of the STDF seminar on International Trade and Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in Geneva on 12-13 July 2012, organized in collaboration with the IPPC and OIE. The seminar, attended by 110 participants, was successful in raising awareness about the mutually supportive objectives of the SPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the contribution of effective SPS control systems to help protect against the entry of harmful species, including pests, diseases and other IAS. Participants shared interesting case stories on national and regional initiatives to control the entry, establishment and spread of IAS, and agreed on the importance of raising public and political awareness to ensure broad support from all concerned stakeholders needed to manage IAS. Detailed information on the seminar, including the presentations and speeches delivered and other relevant documentation, as well as an STDF Briefing Note highlighting the key messages and conclusions, is available on the STDF website: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/en/TAIAS.htm>.

18. The IPPC commended the Secretariat for the seminar and reported that - as a direct result of the seminar - the IPPC and CBD Secretariats are now coordinating actions to participate jointly in their respective workshops to promote a better understanding on the importance to control and manage IAS among environmental agencies and national plant protection organizations. It also highlighted the importance of liaising more with the global environmental research system in order to be more precise on the needs and realities of SPS regulatory systems, and hence avoid unnecessary trade restrictions.

(b) Application of MCDA framework in Asia (and follow-up to MCDA work in Africa)

19. The Secretariat made a presentation on the Multi Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) framework to inform the Working Group about its application process and on the experiences and lessons learned through its application in pilot countries in Africa and Asia. The MCDA is a tool to inform SPS decision-making that helps countries prioritize SPS capacity building options and complements other existing tools aiming at identifying capacity building needs. This structured approach permits countries to establish priorities on the basis of multiple criteria, which may be measured in different ways, facilitates inputs from diverse public/private stakeholders, promotes transparency, facilitates dialogue among SPS stakeholders and aids decision-making and resource allocation. Capacity-building options to be prioritized are defined based on specific products and

specific SPS constraints affecting the exports of these products to particular markets. The MCDA tool takes stock of existing information related to SPS capacity building needs, gathered through the application of existing capacity evaluation tools, as well as other data available, and ranks the different options on the basis of clear assumptions. The results and findings of the analysis can be discussed afterwards and the analysis can be re-run with different assumptions to compare the results of the prioritization exercise.

20. The STDF was directly involved in pilot testing applications of the MCDA tool in Mozambique and Zambia in 2011, as part of the initial development of the framework, and also in Belize and Viet Nam in 2012, with more involvement of national stakeholders. In addition, the Secretariat was informed that the tool was applied in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Malawi and Uganda with support from COMESA and USAID. The MCDA tool was refined and improved through the on-going STDF pilot testing applications at country level. In its Work Plan for 2013, the STDF envisages organizing a regional workshop in Latin America and the Caribbean, a "training-of-trainers" workshop to further disseminate and promote application of the tool among STDF partners and other relevant organizations, and a revision of the MCDA toolkit.

21. The Working Group welcomed the presentation of the Secretariat and recognized the importance and usefulness of the tool in prioritizing specific capacity building needs, determining the impact of investments and identifying new potential areas of interest, through a participatory and transparent process. Some members stressed the importance of having good quality information and of the representativeness of stakeholders. The WHO proposed to explore the possibility of introducing a mechanism to halt the process before ranking the priorities, if there is not sufficient information, or if stakeholders' representativeness is not satisfactory. The IPPC suggested assessing the results of the pilot testing exercises conducted to date, and exploring the possibility of running the exercise separately in the animal health, plant health and food safety areas.

22. The developing country expert from Uganda expressed strong support for the MCDA tool and mentioned that in several COMESA countries its application had started a transparent and open discussion among a wide range of stakeholders about SPS capacity building needs. Previously, decisions were taken by a few and the basis for decisions was not clear. She recognized that information was not always available but felt that this should not be a reason not to do anything. The developing country expert from Belize also expressed her strong support and highlighted that application of the tool in Belize in 2012 was exactly what her country had needed. She looked forward to possible ways to improve the MCDA process.

23. The Working Group agreed with the suggestion from the Secretariat to amend the STDF Work Plan for 2013 by removing the proposed regional MCDA workshop for Latin American and Caribbean countries, and by continuing the discussion on how to improve the MCDA tool at the planned Geneva workshop in June 2013. In preparing for this event, the Secretariat would further assess the results of completed and on-going pilot testing exercises, and solicit more concrete feedback from STDF partners.

(c) Follow-up to AUC/STDF meeting on SPS coordination and capacity building in Africa (28 September 2012)

24. The Secretariat informed the Working Group on a one-day meeting on "Regional SPS Coordination and Capacity Building in Africa" in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 28 September, organized jointly with the African Union Commission (AUC). The meeting was held on the margins of a WTO regional SPS workshop for English-speaking Africa (24-27 September 2012). A total of 24 individuals representing four Regional Economic Communities (COMESA, ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC), three STDF partners (FAO, OIE and WTO) and the AUC, AU-IBAR and AU-IAPSC, participated in the meeting. The findings and conclusions of the 2010 STDF study titled "Regional SPS Frameworks and Strategies in Africa" were presented as well as on-going and planned SPS

initiatives and programmes of the RECs and the AU technical agencies. An official report of the meeting is under preparation by the AUC. Among the most interesting information shared was AUC's plan to create an African Food Safety Authority and a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF, a workshop on the way forward will be held in Kigali on 29-30 October 2012), the establishment a continental SPS working group to mainstream SPS matters within the CAADP framework, and the AU's (planned) involvement in continental issues such as fruit fly, aflatoxin control and pesticide residues.

25. The IPPC and FAO reported on their participation in the meeting. The IPPC recalled to have conveyed its concerns regarding possible overlapping of roles between regional/continental SPS working group and the AU-IAPSC. FAO informed that it had questioned whether the new RASFF would integrate and compliment the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN). Both IPPC and FAO had raised concerns regarding the utility of having additional regional SPS coordination mechanisms.

26. The Secretariat highlighted that the STDF may be requested by the AUC to participate in follow-up meetings and provide further advice and support. Overall, it felt that future efforts should be concentrated more on substance (identifying areas where AU and RECs have value added, strategy and work plans,) and less on process (national SPS coordination mechanisms, continental/regional SPS working groups, etc.).

(d) Organization of STDF work and event on SPS and trade facilitation (in 2013)

27. The Secretariat informed the Working Group about its efforts to initiate background research and preparatory work on the linkages between SPS and trade facilitation, as a means to guide the design and implementation of specific activities as part of the 2013 Work Plan. Initial meetings with some STDF partners (notably the World Bank and WTO) and other organizations (e.g. IDB, UN-ESCAP, World Customs Organization and TradeMark South Africa) have highlighted the timeliness of and widespread interest in this proposed work. The Secretariat referred to the World Bank's publication on "Border Management Modernization" which emphasized the need for empirical information on the practical issues affecting coordination between SPS and customs agencies, and presented the scope of the proposed work. This would include regional research in collaboration with relevant regional institutions to identify, analyse and document specific examples of how SPS agencies are engaged in collaborative border management. The three reports produced through this regional work would be used as the basis for a synthesis report study with good practices and key recommendations on how to enhance the role of SPS agencies in collaborative border management, as well as an STDF Briefing Note. The third proposed element of this work would be a global-level seminar to disseminate and discuss the findings of the regional research and synthesis study.

28. Members generally endorsed the scope of the proposed work. While some members welcomed this work and pointed to the need for research and recommendations on how to become more efficient and effective and improve collaboration between SPS and customs agencies, others expressed concerns about some of the language used in the background note (e.g. references related to delegation of certain tasks to customs authorities) and stressed the absolute importance of "safe" trade. Questions were also raised regarding the World Bank's Logistics Performance Indicators, which indicate that in several countries non-customs authorities (including food safety, animal and plant health authorities) can be the source of the majority of problems, and how these indicators were constructed. The EU supported this work but questioned the need for a two-day global-level event.

29. The Secretariat requested members to propose additional amendments to the background note in the next two weeks (i.e. by 26 October 2012), so that the background note could be revised. The Secretariat indicated that the next step would be to discuss the proposed regional research with relevant institutions. It was noted that the IDB is currently carrying out research in Latin America on this topic and that the IDB and the Secretariat had discussed the scope of this research. The

Secretariat suggested to re-consider the need for a global-level event at the next Working Group meeting and indicated that a draft programme for such an event (if organized) would then be discussed.

(e) Initiation of STDF study on spill-over effects of trade-related food safety projects on the domestic health situation

30. The Secretariat introduced a concept note on the planned study on impacts of SPS technical assistance programmes on the domestic health situation, as part of the 2012 and 2013 Work Plans. The study, to be conducted in close collaboration with FAO and WHO, will contribute towards enhancing the impact of SPS technical assistance by reviewing the effects of past export-oriented food safety projects and will seek to identify good practice and make recommendations on ways to ensure that spill-over effects on the domestic food safety situation can be maximized. This work will comprise the identification of examples and relevant documentation, an in-depth survey and analysis of the results and the elaboration of a study. The Secretariat requested further advice from the Working Group on the focus of this work (i.e. domestic food safety situation vs. other public health related outcomes; food safety projects vs. general SPS-related technical assistance programmes; and specific countries vs. specific projects).

31. The Working Group unanimously supported the proposal of the STDF Secretariat to work on this topic and suggested to focus the research on the domestic food safety situation only (although other public health related outcomes could be documented in the report), to consider general SPS-related technical assistance programmes, and (depending on the examples received during the first phase) to identify specific countries and also specific sectors or products for the in-depth research.

32. The Secretariat requested members to start providing concrete examples of SPS-related technical assistance projects or programmes to be considered for the research within the next four weeks. It was agreed that the Secretariat would report back to the Working Group on this work in March 2013.

Agenda item: 3 (g) (v) - Presentation on the World Bank Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP)

33. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the World Bank official from Washington DC who was scheduled to make the presentation could not attend the meeting, but that the Geneva-based representative from the World Bank (present in the meeting) would report on the discussions in the Working Group. A background document on this partnership ("Indicative Roadmap") was circulated to the Working Group on 28 September 2012. The Secretariat reported on its participation in a stakeholder meeting on this partnership in July 2012 in Washington D.C. and in a meeting with the relevant international organizations directly dealing with food safety issues (FAO, WHO and also OIE, UNIDO and WTO) in September 2012 in Geneva. The Secretariat also conveyed several comments and concerns related to the establishment of the GFSP to the World Bank, but so far had not received a response.

34. Several members of the Working Group recognized the value of an initiative aiming to promote private sector involvement in the food safety area and address food safety issues on a global scale. However, members also raised concerns mainly related to the way the initiative was being set up, the lack of consultation and involvement of the relevant international agencies dealing with food safety issues (in particular FAO and WHO), the possible overlap with the STDF mandate (in particular in terms of coordination and communication), and the lack of clarity on how the partnership will be practically implemented (notably governance, management and decision-making structures).

35. Working Group members generally agreed that they would support an initiative that complements the STDF, highlighting that there should be no duplication of work or competition for resources. It was suggested to wait for more details from the World Bank on the specific focus of the partnership and its practical implementation. Members looked forward to further discussions on these issues prior to the official launch of the initiative scheduled on 10-12 December 2012 in Paris.

(g) Dissemination of information

(i) Presentation on the Virtual Library

36. The Secretariat presented the STDF Virtual Library (<http://www.stdfvirtuallibrary.org>) to the Working Group and showed some of the searching capabilities of the system. The purpose of the library is to enhance the SPS community's access to SPS-related capacity building information and to facilitate STDF's role as a knowledge platform for exchanging information and disseminating good practices. The information included will comprise publicly available SPS-related documentation, including project reports and evaluations, capacity assessments, training materials, research papers, articles, etc., from various publishers and sources.

37. The Secretariat noted that a final technical review of the system will take place over the next few weeks in order to incorporate, as far as possible, the comments and suggestions received from members. The French and Spanish language versions of the system will be finalized afterwards and the content of the system, currently around 800 documents, be further reviewed. Inter-operability between the Virtual Library and the STDF website, to be put on a content management system in 2013, will be ensured.

38. The Secretariat requested members to look at the structure and test the functioning of the system for further comments and suggestions, and initiate and continue to send relevant documentation to be included in the library.

(ii) Electronic STDF newsletter

39. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the first e-newsletter (available on the STDF website: <http://www.standardsfacility.org/en/IRNewsletters.htm>) was circulated in July 2012 and that a second newsletter will be circulated toward the end of October 2012. The Secretariat noted that the STDF electronic mailing list has 754 subscribers and showed some analytics on the geographical distribution of these people as well as open and click rates. The Secretariat requested members to submit relevant information that could be included in the second edition of the newsletter.

(iii) STDF project fact sheets

40. The Secretariat provided an overview of its work and circulated some examples of project fact sheets developed for selected STDF projects. These fact sheets describe the background, main objectives, results and lessons learned for the projects concerned and will be made available on the new website with a printing function. These documents could constitute a first step in a process of "meta-evaluating" STDF projects. The Working Group commended the Secretariat for this work.

(iv) STDF participation in other external events

41. The Secretariat briefly informed the Working Group on its participation in other external meetings and events, since the last Working Group meeting in March 2012, and referred to the list of events available in the annotated agenda ([STDF/WG/Oct12/Annotated agenda](STDF/WG/Oct12/Annotated%20agenda)).

(v) Dissemination of experiences and good practices**- Presentation from Australia**

42. The representative of Australia made a presentation on SPS-related technical capacity building assistance given by Government agencies and State and Territory Governments. From 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2011, Australia provided over A\$37 million on SPS-related assistance to 43 countries and regional organizations, corresponding to around 160 projects covering food safety, animal health and plant protection. The assistance took the form of training activities and development of "soft" and "hard" infrastructure. Details on some of the projects were reported to the WTO SPS Committee in document G/SPS/GEN/717/Add.3. Detailed information on current and planned technical assistance activities is available on the AusAID website: <http://www.ausaid.gov.au>.

43. The presentation by the representative of Australia can be viewed at: http://www.standardsfacility.org/Files/DocsWG/Australia_Oct-12.pdf.

- Presentation of the new IPPC page on phytosanitary resources and the IPPC capacity development strategy

44. The IPPC made a presentation on the new IPPC Phytosanitary Technical Resources webpage: <http://www.phytosanitary.info>. The idea to develop this webpage came through the implementation of an STDF project on the production of global phytosanitary manuals, standard operating procedures and training kits, and started with a call by the IPPC Secretariat for technical resources to contracting parties and relevant organizations. The information received will be directed to the webpage, after a quality control check by the IPPC Capacity Development Committee. Information available on the webpage includes advocacy material, databases of capacity development projects and capacity building activities, which could be fed by members themselves, a roster of consultants, e-learning tools such as the IPPC e-learning course on pest risk analysis, explanatory documents, fact sheets, etc. The IPPC encouraged contributions in any language from anyone working in the field of plant protection, including contracting parties, Regional Plant Protection Organizations and other relevant organizations.

45. In addition, the IPPC National Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategy, which focuses on how to integrate actions of all contributors to phytosanitary capacity building towards the creation of national capacity, was presented. Donors, international organizations and also beneficiaries were encouraged to disseminate this strategy and take it into consideration when discussing new capacity building actions in the phytosanitary area.

46. The presentation by the representative of IPPC can be viewed at: http://www.standardsfacility.org/Files/DocsWG/IPPC_Oct-12.pdf.

- Other information from partners, donors, developing country experts and observers

47. The Secretariat made a presentation on the information received from Working Group members on their on-going and planned SPS-related capacity building activities (replacing the compilation document that used to be distributed at the meeting). The presentation can be viewed at: http://www.standardsfacility.org/Files/DocsWG/STDF_Oct-12.ppt.

48. The Secretariat referred to information received from the AUC on the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), to be launched on 31 October 2012, which aims to act as a clearing-house for information, communication and control of aflatoxin in the region. The Secretariat presented the information received from the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) on progress made to date in the implementation of the EIF, including figures related to the status of Diagnostic Trade

Integration Studies (DTIS) and Tier 2 projects. Finally, the Secretariat highlighted two publications received from the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department of the African Region at the World Bank on "Addressing Standards Management Challenges from a Strategic Trade Perspective" and "Regional Quality Standards for Food Staples in Africa".

49. The representative from the World Bank made a presentation on a recent publication entitled: "Streamlining Non-Tariff Measures: A Toolkit for Policy Makers". The presentation can be viewed at: http://www.standardsfacility.org/Files/DocsWG/WB_Oct-12.pdf. The toolkit covers a wide range of Non-Tariff Measures and focuses on the procedures for enforcement and verification of a measure done at the border. The tool helps countries to identify the costs and benefits of a measure and allows governments to prioritise regulatory reforms based on impacts on the economy in a coordinated and transparent manner (by promoting dialogue between key stakeholders affected by the measure). The tool could be used for different reasons of interest to governments such as improving competitiveness, transparency and better governance, regional integration or increasing welfare.

50. The Secretariat briefly introduced a film produced by the World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department: "An Africa That Can Feed Africa" (<http://vimeo.com/48447764>) and also informed the Working Group that a report on this topic will be issued before the end of October 2012. The film advocates that Africa can potentially grow enough food to feed the continent and avert future food crises if countries remove cross-border restrictions on food trade within the region. According to the new report, the continent would also generate an extra US \$20 billion in yearly earnings if African leaders can agree to dismantle trade barriers that blunt more regional dynamism. Some members recommended the World Bank for the film and the message it conveyed, while others thought that the film did not give sufficient weight to legitimate SPS trade-restricting measures.

51. Germany informed the Working Group on a workshop on "Strategies to Improve Food Safety in Southeast Asia" on 5-6 November 2012 in Bangkok, co-organized by the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) of Thailand, Consumers International and GIZ. A tentative programme focusing on four sessions: (i) official control systems; (ii) private sector control systems; (iii) the perspective of consumers organizations; and (iii) regional co-operation in the area of food safety, was shared.

52. The WTO presented an overview of its planned SPS training workshops, including two regional workshops for Asia and Pacific (Taipei, 6-9 November 2012) and for Central and Eastern Europe, Centre Asia and the Caucasus (Vienna, 20-23 November 2012), national SPS seminars to be held in Botswana (23-25 October 2012), Burkina Faso (12-14 November 2012) and Zambia (21-23 November 2012) and, finally, participation in a PAN-SPSO training-of-trainers workshop, organized by AU-IBAR, in Senegal on 27-30 November 2012.

4. Improved capacity of beneficiaries to identify needs and formulate projects (output 2)

(a) Presentation of applications not accepted for consideration

53. The Secretariat gave a brief overview of the PG and PPG applications that were not tabled for consideration by the Working Group and that in some instances needed further work. The applications and the reasons for not tabling them are listed in document [STDF/WG/Oct12/Review](#).

(b) Discussion of PPG applications***STDF/PPG/379 – Promoting the effective participation of SADC Member States in the WTO SPS Committee***

54. The Working Group was not able to agree on whether to approve funding for this request. Although there was broad support from most Working Group members to approve funding for this proposal, FAO and IPPC requested that the SADC Secretariat provide more information in the proposal on: (i) the underlying obstacles, beyond the lack of national budgeting, that are currently inhibiting active participation in SPS Committee meetings; and (ii) whether the EU-funded Regional Economic Integration Support (REIS) programme will not already deal with the identified needs. They also requested more information on the links between the SADC SPS Coordinating Committee and its terms of reference with the ensuing project. The Working Group suggested that the SADC Secretariat revise the current application for onward submission to the STDF Secretariat, which will then discuss the revised application with FAO and IPPC. The Working Group considered this proposal to be approved, if and when FAO and IPPC agree to the revised application. FAO and IPPC noted that they would be willing to approve this request before the next Working Group meeting if they are satisfied with the revised proposal.

55. The Secretariat recognized the concerns of FAO and IPPC but also recalled that the request from SADC was a PPG and not a project grant. One purpose of the PPG process is to establish if and how a project can be developed. Hence, some concerns, such as the role of the SADC SPS Coordinating Committee, would also be addressed during PPG implementation.

STDF/PPG/392 – Integrating SPS and GAP/HACCP in Sierra Leone

56. The Working Group decided not to approve funding for this request. Although there was unanimous agreement on the need for assistance to Sierra Leone to be able to access developed markets for agriculture and fishery products, members raised concerns over the scope and objectives of the ensuing project. Members noted that the application focuses on the lack of capacity for meeting GAP/HACCP standards and advocates an integrated approach for improving hygiene management. The application, however, also seems to recognize that the major issue may be a broader institutional one, which may require the restructuring of the food safety control system as a whole. In light of this lack of clarity, the Working Group recommended that the application be revised and re-submitted for consideration at the next meeting.

STDF/PPG/400 – Capacity building for aflatoxin management and control in groundnuts in Malawi

57. The Working Group approved this PPG request and agreed that aflatoxin contamination is a major problem for public health and trade, and that this PPG would be valuable in developing a national aflatoxin control programme which builds on existing initiatives, addresses outstanding gaps and priorities, and promotes coordination. Members highlighted that during implementation of the PPG it would be important to actively involve all the concerned government ministries and departments (including but not limited to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the Ministry of Health) and private sector stakeholders. In addition, the Working Group recommended that all the relevant development partners and potential donors be fully consulted and engaged from the outset in order to ensure that the resulting programme secures the funds needed for its implementation.

STDF/PPG/407 – Streamlining SPS infrastructure in Burkina Faso

58. The Working Group decided not to approve this request for funding. Members agreed that the application was not sufficiently clear on the objectives it seeks to achieve in the ensuing project.

The application also failed to convince the Working Group that key stakeholders were consulted in its formulation. Members noted that it was evident that this type of initiative would require a strong commitment from all stakeholder institutions. The Working Group recommended that the application be substantially revised and re-submitted for consideration at a future date.

(c) Overview of implementation of on-going PPGs

59. The Secretariat introduced document STDF/WG/Oct12/Overview, which provides an overview of the implementation status of all on-going PPGs. The Secretariat requested an extension in the allowable time to contract STDF/PPG/370, which was granted by the Working Group.

60. In relation to the implementation of STDF/PPG/346 (COMESA Green Pass), the Secretariat drew members' attention to a legal study conducted by FAO on The National Legal Implications of the COMESA Green Pass Certification Scheme. In October 2011, the Working Group considered the conduct of this study to be a necessary first step when it approved this PPG request. The FAO summarized the main conclusions of the study and shared information on a meeting that was held between STDF, COMESA and the FAO on 20 September 2012 to discuss the study and the ways forward. It was agreed in this meeting that COMESA would submit a concept note on subsequent project development work as part of the second phase of this PPG for discussion by the Working Group. One suggestion for follow-up work discussed in this meeting was to look at specific commodities traded among COMESA members, analyse the types of regulations that are in place and see whether these are justified and necessary from an SPS perspective (and, if not, whether they can be amended and/or simplified).

61. The Working Group agreed that COMESA would prepare a concept note outlining the next steps, upon which the Secretariat would prepare, in consultation with the FAO, the terms of reference for the follow-up project development work. In principle, USD 90,000 would be available for this follow-up work.

5. Improved capacity of beneficiaries of STDF projects (output 3)

(a) Discussion of project applications

STDF/PG/359 – African Pesticide Residue Data Generation Project: Strengthening regional capacity to meet pesticides export requirements based on international standards

62. The Secretariat introduced this application and recalled that this proposal had originated from an STDF PPG approved by the Working Group in March 2012. The Working Group agreed that this project was of particular interest to the STDF given its regional, collaborative and inter-disciplinary approach to capacity building, and complementarity to other relevant on-going initiatives. The Working Group approved the request for funding. In the absence of any food safety authority in Africa, the Working Group agreed for AU-IBAR to implement the project as requested and recommended that the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) be fully engaged in the Project Steering Committee and implementation of the project, where appropriate.

STDF/PG/345 – Feed and Food Security Program - A project for regulatory harmonization and feed safety in Latin America and the Caribbean

63. The Secretariat introduced the application, which was developed through an STDF PPG approved in March 2011. While there was unanimous agreement on the importance and relevance of the project for the region, the OIE noted that there were some specific points that should be clarified and strengthened in the application document. The OIE noted that its role is unclear in the project and that there is no mention of either the OIE standards or the PVS Pathway. The FAO noted that its legal office had identified certain legal components of the project that would benefit from further

clarification (despite a support letter for the project from FAO's Regional Office). The Working Group suggested that FEEDLATINA contact the OIE and FAO regional offices and headquarters to clarify the outstanding issues and revise the application accordingly to be considered at the next Working Group meeting. The developing country expert from Brazil highlighted once more the importance of this project for the region.

64. The Secretariat clarified that STDF-funded projects could warrant the involvement of a partner but that this is not automatically implied. In line with STDF's Operational Rules, the role of STDF partners is first and foremost to review the projects from a technical perspective.

STDF/PG/381 – "CocoaSafe": Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing in SPS in Cocoa in South East Asia

65. The Secretariat introduced this proposal and noted that it aims to maintain and increase market access of cocoa exports from Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea by improving practices along the supply chain to meet international food safety standards. Approval for funding was granted by the Working Group subject to the following conditions: (i) letters of commitment are submitted by Indonesia and Malaysia to confirm their in-cash contribution to the project; (ii) the logical framework of the project is improved to the satisfaction of the STDF Secretariat prior to contracting; (iii) lessons learned from the FAO-led Farmer Field Schools programme in South-East are adequately taken into account and linkages established as necessary; and (iv) letters of support to the project are submitted by the SPS authorities in the project countries (including the national plant protection organizations and the food safety institutions).

STDF/PG/401 – Training of Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) Facilitators

66. The Working Group approved this request for funding subject to the following conditions being met (to the satisfaction of the STDF Secretariat): (i) inclusion in the application of relevant experiences and lessons learned in training PVS facilitators in the OIE context; (ii) further clarification of activities under outputs 2 and 3, including the selection of participants, selection of countries for the national workshops, terms of reference for the lead experts (if workshops are not conducted by IPPC Secretariat staff), etc.; (iii) improvement of the logical framework, including in relation to certain indicators and the insertion of measurable targets where appropriate; and (iv) revision of the budget, including clarification of the (in-kind) contribution of the IPPC Secretariat.

67. Although the Governments of four developing countries (Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan and the Philippines) officially submitted this application, the Working Group concurred with the Secretariat that the application should in effect be regarded as a proposal developed and submitted by the IPPC Secretariat. The Working Group decided that paragraph 79 of the STDF Operational Rules should be applied to any future applications submitted by either the IPPC or Codex Secretariat. In practice, this means that future IPPC or Codex applications will not be reviewed by the STDF Secretariat but by an independent consultant/expert designated by the Secretariat. This procedure is also prescribed for applications received by any of the five STDF partners (FAO, OIE, World Bank, WHO, WTO).

STDF/PG/406 – Support for the Implementation of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in Dairy and Vegetable Production in Nicaragua (APLaV)

68. The Working Group decided to not approve this request due to duplication of certain activities with the MOTSSA project (STDF/PG/155) which is currently being implemented by IICA and because of the lack of information on the prioritization process that allowed the identification of dairy products and vegetables and project approach. The Working Group suggested that the applicant substantially revise the proposal for future consideration. The IPPC recommended that Nicaragua apply the PCE tool in order to assess the needs of the plant protection system before presenting a project related to vegetable production.

(b) Decisions on financing and prioritizing

69. The Secretariat reported that no decision on prioritization was required.

(c) Overview of implementation of on-going projects

70. The Secretariat introduced document STDF/WG/Oct12/Overview, which provides an overview of the implementation status of all on-going projects. It was noted that six specific projects (STDF/PG/298, STDF/PG/300, STDF/PG/318, STDF/PG/319, STDF/PG/326 and STDF/PG/238) had requested extensions for implementation without any budgetary implications. The Working Group granted all the requests.

71. The Secretariat proposed that the Working Group would release the funds allocated to the project entitled "Strengthening SPS capacity in Guinea-Bissau" (STDF/PG/309) given the lack of improvement in the security situation in the country and the fact that approval was initially given more than two years ago (October 2010). The Working Group agreed to release the funds in order to be able to re-allocate them to other STDF activities and instructed the Secretariat to inform the applicant accordingly. It was highlighted that Guinea-Bissau would be allowed to re-submit this proposal at a future date.

72. The Secretariat circulated and introduced a request received (one day prior to the Working Group) from the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC) – through the ITC (supervisory agency) – for additional funding to complete activities for the project entitled “Expanding exports of sesame seeds and sheanut butter through improved SPS capacity building for private and public sector in Nigeria” (STDF/PG/172). The ITC further explained the reasons behind this request. Several members noted that they had not had enough time to review the request. Some members questioned why the need for additional funds was presented so late in the implementation phase. The ITC agreed to submit a revised document with further details on the project. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate the revised document and allow a comment period for members to present their approval or disapproval.

(d) Project evaluations

73. The Secretariat drew the Working Group's attention to the final evaluation report of the project entitled “Building capacity to use the PCE tool in the Pacific” (STDF/PG/133), which was circulated prior to the meeting. The evaluation report would soon be available on the STDF website. The Secretariat circulated a short-list of potential consultants for the outstanding projects that have been selected for evaluation. Members agreed on a two-week comment period (i.e. until 26 October) to make comments on the list of potential candidates.

6. Other business

74. There was no other business raised and the meeting closed at 4.15 p.m.

ANNEX 1

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¹ Chinese Taipei is a WTO Member in application of Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement (1994). WTO membership has no implication regarding the sovereignty of the Member pursuant to international law.