



AFRICAN UNION

African Union Commission (AUC) SPS Related Activities

1. Introduction

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

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.

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 (7) Malabo thematic areas of performance commitment was 'Boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services'.

3. The African Continental Free Trade Area

The Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, (also referred to as the Abuja Treaty of 1991), envisaged several stages of integration including formation of a continental free trade area and customs union as steps towards realization of full African economic integration. With this in mind, African Ministers of Trade at their meeting in December 2014 called upon the African Union Commission (AUC) and Pan African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) institutions to assess the status of Quality Infrastructure in Africa. The purpose was to give a summarized and easy to understand picture of where African countries stand in terms of their capacity to implement

standards/measures for safety, agricultural and industrial development and market access. This was re-emphasized at the start of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) negotiations where cooperation in the area of standards and addressing NTBs was identified as important for the successful implementation of the historic free trade area agreement.

Under the leadership of the AUC Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Pan African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) Secretariat an assessment of the standardization, metrology and accreditation capacities of African countries was carried out in 2014 and updated in 2017. The findings are captured in a report named PAQI Stocktaking Document for Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) which was a useful reference for the TBT situational analysis in Africa at the start of AfCFTA negotiations. The report can be accessed at www.paqi.org.

A similar exercise is now being undertaken for SPS measures and has been tuned to respond to the requirements of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods Annex on SPS measures. AU Member States capacity to meet the SPS Measures annex requirements will be assessed and scored against a set of pre-determined indicators. This will enable policy makers and development partners to see at a glance where SPS capacity gaps exist and to accurately direct investments to achieve the necessary corrective capacity development measures. The assessment will cover Legislative framework; Capacity to conduct Risk Assessment on human health for setting or updating SPS measures; Capacity to conduct Risk Assessment on animal health for setting or updating sanitary measures; Capacity to conduct Risk Assessment on plant health for setting or updating phytosanitary measures; Capacity to implement the concept of regionalization; Equivalence; Harmonization (phytosanitary standards); Harmonization (sanitary standards); Harmonization (sanitary and phytosanitary standards); Audit and verification; Inspection; Transparency; and Emergency procedures.

This work is being led by the Pan African Quality Infrastructure secretariat and the AUC Department of Trade and Industry in collaboration with the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) and its Technical Offices; the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the Inter Africa Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC) including the programme addressing aflatoxin, the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), and other organizations dealing with SPS issues on the continent including the Codex Committee for Africa,. The work is expected to be concluded in early 2019.

The SPS stocktaking outcomes are expected to inform the development of an AU Continental SPS Policy framework that was requested by the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment 2nd ordinary session of October 2017. The policy framework will help to facilitate harmonization of AU Member States SPS policy framework in general and to inform the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the expected establishment of a Pan African Food Safety Laboratory.

COORDINATING FALL ARMYWORM MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

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.

The main challenge currently is inadequate early warning systems in many countries. For the common pest outbreaks, farmers rely heavily on the use of agrochemicals particularly pesticides, which result in increased production cost and negative impact on public health and the environment. In addition, intensive pesticide use increases the risk of pesticide residue in the produce, thus conceding competitiveness of Africa's agricultural products in the regional and global trade. Moreover, increased trade and mobility of people increases the probability of pest introduction in new areas more so with the relatively weak national plant protection and quarantine services in many African countries.

The African Union Commission is taking policy and political leadership and working with partners (USAID, CIMMYT, ICIPE, IITA etc.) to raise awareness at the highest policy-making level. The Fall Armyworm challenge has been a rolling agenda item for discussion for the AU 2018 January and July Summits.

The African Union and the FAO are currently implementing a Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) on reinforcing plant health governance in Africa through coordinated management of the Fall Armyworm. The TCP is supporting the development of a coordinated early warning and rapid response systems at national and regional levels and to address technical capacity gaps. It will also help to strengthen phytosanitary systems further, given the FAO's comparative advantages especially; its broad global knowledge and experience across elements of food and agriculture. The Commission values FAO's specific roles of advocacy and awareness raising, strengthening governance frameworks, supporting the establishment of national and regional surveillance and monitoring systems for early warning, developing tools and capacity building efforts. As part of the TCP, the African Union Inter African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC) organized meetings the African Union member states to "Fast tracking and Harmonizing pesticides registration for Fall Armyworm control in Africa"; understand and harmonize position in preparation for the 13th Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM); to discuss strategic issues for Africa, particularly the rapid spread and infestation of fall armyworm in the margins of CPM; and on using Biological control and IPM methods as alternatives to using chemical materials for protection of human and plant health besides protecting the environment.

Addressing the FAW Research for Development (R4D)

CIMMYT and IITA are coordinating an International Consortium of diverse institutions to explore ways to synergistically work on short-, medium- and long-term solutions to tackle the challenge of FAW in Africa. Currently, has more than 35 global institutions. The FAW R4D International Consortium is expected to complement and contribute to the coordination efforts of FAO and national FAW task forces on sustainable management of FAW in Africa. The inaugural Conference of the FAW R&D Consortium will be hosted by the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 29-30 October 2018.