

## **SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STDF WORKING GROUP MEETING**

**10 December 2009**

**WTO Headquarters, Geneva**

### **Adoption of Agenda**

1. The Working Group meeting was chaired by Mr Rien Huige (Permanent Mission of the Netherlands), vice-chair of the Working Group, in the absence of the chair, Ms Sofie H. Flensburg (Permanent Mission of Denmark).
2. The chair welcomed Ms Chaweewan Leowijuk (Asia, animal health) and Mr Washington Otieno (Africa, plant health) as new developing country representatives. The third representative, Ms Antonieta Urrutia Anabalon (Americas, food safety), was absent due to personal reasons. The chair noted that the selection of a new LDC representative is still ongoing and that Mr Lucas Saronga, chair of the LDC Group, would observe the meeting in the interim period.
3. The agenda was adopted with three amendments. The Secretariat requested to withdraw two projects, STDF 79 and STDF 134, from agenda items 8 and 9, respectively, and to add one project, STDF 173, under agenda item 9. A list of participants is provided in **Annex 1**.

### **Election of vice-chair**

4. The Secretariat recalled that the current vice-chair of the Working Group (the Netherlands) would be chairing the Working Group meetings in 2010, and that according to the Operational Rules a new vice-chair should be elected for next year. The Working Group elected the United States as the new vice-chair of the Working Group.

### **Overview of Operation of the Facility**

5. Mr Clem Boonekamp, Director of the Agriculture and Commodities Division of the WTO, informed the Working Group of the selection of Mr Melvin Spreij as the new Secretary of the STDF.

### ***Report and discussion on STDF seminars and workshops***

#### **Regional training of trainer workshops under the PAN-SPSO project**

6. The Secretariat briefed the Working Group on ongoing collaboration with the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR) within the framework of the EC-funded PAN-SPSO project. Two four-day SPS "training-of-trainers" seminars were organized in Nairobi (13-16 July) and Bamako (20-23 July) for SPS officials of seven regional economic communities (RECs) - as well as a number of selected African SPS experts. The seminars laid the necessary foundation for subsequent training to be provided under PAN-SPSO at regional and country levels. Trainers from the WTO, STDF, Codex, OIE and IPPC Secretariats provided the participants - who were already familiar with the SPS Agreement, or the work of Codex, IPPC or OIE - with training materials and guidance on how to provide SPS-related training.
7. The Secretariat also reported on two other ongoing activities in the context of PAN-SPSO, i.e. a study on regional and national SPS collaboration mechanisms (conducted by an external consultant and to be finalized in April 2010) and facilitation of observer status and participation of the RECs in meetings of the SPS Committee, Codex, OIE and IPPC.

8. FAO sought further clarification about the role of the STDF in subsequent regional training workshops under PAN-SPSO in 2010. The Secretariat explained that its participation would focus on the adequate use of training materials, the appropriateness of selection of trainees and the content of the training provided from a WTO perspective, in addition to using this opportunity to disseminate information on the STDF more widely. Codex and OIE requested further details regarding the role of the STDF in facilitating observer status in the international standard setting bodies (ISSBs). The Secretariat highlighted that information was received in 2009 from each of the ISSBs on the applicable rules and procedures for observer status. This information was compiled into one single document and forwarded to AU/IBAR for onward dissemination to the RECs. The ISSBs may consider organizing briefing sessions for new observers, if any, before their meetings in 2010-11. The Secretariat will be working with the WTO Secretariat to organize such briefing sessions in advance of SPS Committee meetings, where appropriate (so far the WTO had received requests from ECOWAS, CEN-SAD and SADC). The ISSBs may also consider providing further guidance on this issue in their capacity as observers in the PAN-SPSO Steering Committee.

#### Seminar on SPS risks and climate change

9. The Secretariat informed the Working Group about this seminar organized jointly with the World Bank Development Research Group in Washington, D.C., on 22-23 September. The seminar was attended by approximately 100 officials from international organizations, regulatory and development agencies, research, academia and the private sector. The STDF had funded the participation of ten officials - including seven speakers and participants from developing countries. Overall, the event had been effective in increasing awareness about the linkages between SPS and climate change, and the importance of SPS capacity building to help mitigate the negative effects.

10. The Secretariat also reported on further steps taken to disseminate the conclusions of the seminar more widely. These included: (i) publication of a one-page briefing note summarizing the seminar's key messages; (ii) its distribution at events such as the SPS Committee meeting in October, a meeting of the OECD Development Assistance Committee in November, and an Overseas Development Institute (ODI) event on trade and climate change during the WTO Ministerial meeting in November/December; (iii) ongoing preparation of a document compiling summaries of the presentations given by the speakers and chairs; and (iv) posting of all presentations and related documents - as well as the aforementioned publications - on the STDF website.

#### Stakeholder workshop on Regional Action Plan to control fruit fly in West Africa

11. This workshop took place on 29-30 September in Bamako and was jointly organized with ECOWAS, in collaboration with the World Bank and the Government of Mali. The workshop was attended by 92 participants who reviewed and validated a complementary study on a Regional Action Plan to control fruit fly in West Africa conducted by COLEACP. The event had been successful in sensitizing stakeholders on budget and institutional arrangements necessary to implement the 5-year action plan, costed at €25 million. Participants adopted the "Bamako Declaration", which endorsed the plan and recommended actions required to ensure appropriate follow-up by governments, donors and the private sector in the months to come. These included presentation of the fruit fly initiative at the ECOWAS Aid for Trade review in January 2010.

12. A donor meeting on the second day of the workshop indicated strong willingness by key donors (USAID, EU, AfDB, CFC<sup>1</sup> and the World Bank) to work under a common umbrella towards the objectives identified in the Regional Action Plan. ECOWAS had committed approximately €850,000 for implementation of the plan (starting in March 2010) and UEMOA intended to contribute a similar amount under its triennial plan. The plan had been presented by ECOWAS at the International Conference on Investment in Agriculture, organized by ECOWAS in collaboration

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<sup>1</sup> Common Fund for Commodities

with the Spanish Government, in November. Donors had provided their unanimous support to ECOWAS' Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and pledged resources to support the regional compact on investment in agriculture which would include a sub-component on fruit fly control. ECOWAS had also started preparations to submit a proposal under the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund. CFC had expressed interest in implementing the plan in three countries: Burkina Faso, Mali and Ivory Coast.

#### Workshop on the use of economic analysis to inform SPS decision-making

13. This workshop, held in Geneva on 30 October back-to-back with the SPS Committee meeting, was attended by approximately 250 participants - including 50 developing country experts in food safety, animal and plant health funded by the WTO Global Trust Fund and ten officials funded by the STDF. Ten speakers from developing and developed countries, as well as international organizations, provided examples and experiences of the use of economic analysis to estimate the costs, benefits and returns on investments in food safety, animal and plant health capacity building. Presentations and podcasts were available on the STDF website and a one-page briefing note summarizing the key points and conclusions had been prepared.

14. As part of the activities for this workshop, the STDF commissioned the preparation of a guidance document (circulated before the meeting) containing an overview of different economic analysis methodologies and how they have been used in the SPS area. The document proposed the use of multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) as a useful alternative to more traditional cost benefit analysis and cost effectiveness analysis. MCDA would enable capacity building options to be prioritised based on a wide range of decision criteria (for example value of exports, impacts on small-scale producers, improvements in domestic public health and/or agricultural productivity, etc.) that are not necessarily measured (or even measurable) using the same metrics. The Working Group agreed to provide further comments on this document by 15 January 2010, as appropriate.

15. The Secretariat also presented planned follow-up activities to this work (as part of the draft Operating Plan 2010-11), including pilot testing of the MCDA approach in 2-3 developing countries and development of a practical user guide and related training materials targeted at experts in developing countries responsible for SPS issues. The selection of pilot countries was open to discussion and suggestions from the Working Group but should be primarily based on demand expressed by countries. A background note would be provided for discussion at the next Working Group meeting in March 2010.

16. The Working Group welcomed STDF's previous and planned work on the use of economic analysis. Some members raised concerns on holding this type of workshop back-to-back with the SPS Committee. Although this allowed the Secretariat to reach a wider audience, it may not be the right audience as far as maximization of impact is concerned. To assess the further impact of such events, follow-up would be required at country or even at community level to assess how messages are getting across and how tools described and subsequently developed are being used, even for simple decision-making at community level.

17. OIE stressed the importance of including non-economically measurable outputs of veterinary services which are considered a "public good". The Secretariat highlighted that one of the findings of the application of the PVS GAP analysis, and of the recent evaluation of the World Fund for Animal Health and Welfare, was that developing countries need assistance to address the economic aspects of SPS capacity building. Some members suggested that the pilot tests should include the fruit fly case to link this work to the STDF initiative on fruit fly control in West Africa.

18. UNCTAD mentioned that economic analysis may be useful to quantify the resources required to improve the SPS situation and boost exports. Quantification may help countries to base their assistance requests on sound estimates and make decisions on budgetary allocations.

UNCTAD's study on the cost of SPS compliance in selected Pacific Island countries was cited as an example in this regard.

### ***Presentation and discussion on STDF study on SPS indicators***

19. The Secretariat provided an update on ongoing STDF work on SPS performance indicators, in collaboration with the OECD, and recalled that the Working Group had decided in previous meetings to focus this work on identifying a common set or basket of indicators used at project and programme level rather than exploring and developing indicators at an aggregate level. The objectives of this work were to: (i) better measure and monitor outputs, outcomes and impacts of SPS capacity building initiatives at project and programme levels; and (ii) ensure sustainability of SPS-related technical cooperation.

20. The Secretariat noted that limited inputs had been received from STDF partners, donors and observers - in terms of specific examples of performance indicators, logical frameworks and general constraints faced in measuring performance – which hindered completion of the Secretariat's report. Members of the Working Group agreed to provide additional inputs by the deadline of 15 January 2010. The Secretariat would then complete the report and inform the Working Group in March 2010. A workshop on this topic was planned in 2010 (as part of the Operating Plan 2010-11) and a concept note and draft agenda would also be presented to the Working Group for discussion in March 2010.

21. OIE expressed its reservations regarding the proposed workshop and argued that there was a risk that it would showcase complex theoretical quantitative models that are not easy to use and do not recognize the "public good" element of SPS capacity building. OIE proposed to make a presentation at the workshop on its experience in the use of the OIE PVS tool to maintain an appropriate balance between quantitative/economic approaches and those that are based on more practical indicators.

22. Upon request from the World Bank, the Secretariat explained that appropriate indicators may be extracted from stand-alone SPS projects as well as from broader projects with an SPS component (focusing on, for instance, agriculture or private sector development).

### ***Funding Situation***

23. The Secretariat presented an overview of the funding situation. As of 24 November, contributions for 2009 had been received from Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, Germany, Japan, Netherlands and the United States, totalling CHF 3,837,737 (approx. US\$ 3,677,966). It was noted that this amount was still CHF 1,379,463 short of the annual target level of funding of US\$5 million - but that additional pledges for 2009, and beyond, had recently been made by Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland. Overall, the funding situation of the Facility had improved considerably, partly due to the positive external evaluation of the Facility in 2008.

### ***Presentation and discussion of draft Annual Report***

24. The Secretariat presented an overview of the draft Annual Report for 2009, to seek approval from the Working Group on its format and solicit comments on the information provided. It was noted that the final report would be issued in April 2010, including a financial overview as well as information on projects currently being completed/evaluated.

25. The Secretariat highlighted several elements of the report including the efforts made by the Secretariat to promote the exchange and dissemination of information in the Working Group, the enhancement of the STDF website, as well as various publications and other tools such as the STDF film. Coordination with other organizations and initiatives was also significantly enhanced,

including the EIF and the Aid for Trade initiative. UNIDO urged for a more systematic collaboration through, for instance, STDF observer status in EIF Board meetings

26. The Working Group welcomed the draft Annual Report and suggested some improvements. These included the insertion of a paragraph at the end of the section on evaluated projects to capture lessons learned and recommendations on improvements to be made in the evaluation methodology, constraints of impact assessment, etc. The Secretariat noted that an overview document of completed evaluations of STDF projects would be discussed under agenda item 9 and observed that the STDF report on SPS performance indicators may also provide useful input in terms of improving impact assessments. Some members suggested that future annual reports should follow the logical framework matrix used in future operating plans for ease of reference.

### **Presentation, discussion and adoption of STDF Operating Plan 2010-11**

27. The Secretariat introduced the draft Operating Plan 2010-11 and indicated that comments were received from the EU, FAO and Germany prior to the meeting. In response to Germany's comments, the Secretariat explained that various tools will be used to undertake STDF's coordination and information dissemination function, i.e. through the Working Group itself, by greater and improved use of the STDF website, and by putting more efforts into publications, etc. In response to a request from the EU, it was emphasized that the plan contains several references to the Aid for Trade work programme for 2010-11 and that linkages will be further strengthened during implementation of this programme, where appropriate.

28. The Secretariat raised the issue whether STDF's next external evaluation should take place in the first half of 2011 (i.e. before drafting a new STDF strategy in the second half of 2011) or in the second half of 2012. The Working Group was reminded that the last evaluation took place in 2008 and that - according to the Operational Rules - the Facility should be reviewed externally at least every four years. The Working Group decided to refer this matter to the STDF Policy Committee.

29. OIE considered that too much time and resources were spent on the evaluation of projects and proposed that in future *ex post* evaluations be undertaken on an occasional basis and targeted to address projects that presented particular problems, according to criteria to be drawn up by the Secretariat. This point was discussed at length by the Working Group. Some members suggested that an evaluation should only be carried out when it might have an impact in terms of lessons learned, depending on the nature and type of project. It was decided to maintain the existing rule on the evaluation of projects in the STDF Operational Rules ("All projects funded by the STDF shall include a provision for an independent *ex post* evaluation, unless otherwise directed by the Working Group"). However, the Secretariat was requested to be more specific on the reasons and criteria used when making recommendations to the Working Group whether to evaluate projects or not.

30. Sweden, supported by the EU and Germany, recommended that the Secretariat put in place a more coherent results-based management system - by linking activities to specific strategic objectives - to further facilitate monitoring, follow-up and evaluation. It was of the view that more efforts should be made to improve monitoring at the outcome and impact level via determining suitable indicators and a more systematic follow-up of coordination activities. This would require a further revision of the proposed logical framework matrix. The monitoring and financial efficiency of STDF projects should also be improved by including more detailed budget descriptions. Increasing the use of local consultants was also proposed.

31. WHO suggested that interaction with the "FERG initiative" should help the STDF select suitable indicators to include in the logical framework matrix in order to better identify the impact of STDF activities on public health.

32. The Netherlands welcomed the gradual shift in the Operating Plan to more coordination activities at regional and national levels. It also supported STDF's proposed work on exploring the activities of NGOs, private sector foundations etc. and South-South cooperation in the SPS area. It suggested that the plan should further specify how the Secretariat intends to collaborate with WTO's regular technical assistance programme on SPS issues.

33. Following the first round of general comments on the draft Operating Plan, the Secretariat introduced the various elements of STDF's planned coordination and information dissemination activities. Overall, the Working Group stressed the need to focus on selected activities to allow sufficient time for follow-up. While the Working Group deemed coordination with broader initiatives important, some members felt that STDF should concentrate its efforts on enhancing SPS capacity, and hence maintain its distance from non-SPS issues, such as quality issues, etc.

34. The Working Group generally supported proposed work on public-private partnerships (PPPs) in SPS capacity building. The OECD noted that collaboration with the private sector through PPPs helps in boosting exports from developing countries and was in favour of this planned activity. The World Bank also expressed strong support for this work and suggested collaboration with the World Bank's ongoing programme on enhancing private sector capacities. It mentioned that STDF's previous involvement in 2009 in the Conference on Agriculture, Trade and Investment in Singapore was highly valued by participants and suggested that STDF should participate in APEC's Food Safety Cooperation Forum to be held in Beijing in September 2010. Some members, including the United States, OIE and FAO, expressed some concerns, notably in relation to the linkages with private standards. It was agreed that the Secretariat would further scope the work on PPPs in SPS capacity building - prior to discussions in the Working Group in 2010.

35. The Working Group also supported STDF's proposed pilot project on testing various economic analysis approaches - followed by development of a practical guide and training material. The report produced for the workshop on 30 October was found to be highly informative. Germany suggested discussing possible collaboration in this area with the Trade Standards Practitioners Network (TSPN) at the next Working Group in March 2010, notably in relation to expanding the use of methodologies to include decision-making about private standards. OIE reiterated its concerns about STDF's involvement in private standards and putting focus on economic outputs only. The Working Group agreed to further discuss this pilot project in March 2010 - based on a concept note prepared by the Secretariat.

36. The Working Group took note of STDF's continued efforts to explore synergies between SPS and trade facilitation. Some members emphasized that the Secretariat should focus only on those trade facilitation capacity building programmes that encompass SPS elements. The Working Group reiterated its recommendation to seek ways to foster more systematic, pragmatic and practical collaboration with the EIF - and to step up efforts to mobilize additional resources. This work should be undertaken at the EIF Board level - as well as at country level by working with EIF focal points, providing comments on the DTIS studies, basing project development on constraints identified in the DTIS studies, and exploring co-funding possibilities where appropriate.

37. On collaboration with TSPN, the Secretariat recalled that TSPN had been invited to make a presentation on its activities at the next Working Group in March 2010. The Secretariat will attend a TSPN Board meeting in 2010 and also make a presentation. The Working Group supported this approach. Some members cautioned that the STDF should not be seen as endorsing private standard schemes.

38. ITC highlighted that it would like to explore further opportunities of collaboration with the STDF in delivering activities oriented towards enhancing SPS capacities of the private sector. The EU observed that coordination with other organizations and initiatives should go beyond participation in meetings and translate into concrete activities. The Secretariat agreed and recalled

that participation in meetings is generally useful to disseminate information about STDF's work and should be seen as a first step towards subsequent joint activities. The involvement of the UK Natural Resource Institute (NRI) in STDF meetings was cited as an example in this regard.

39. The Working Group discussed the increasing use of the STDF website as a platform for information exchange and dissemination. It was agreed to revise the Operating Plan by including information on technical assistance provided by partners and members of the Facility in the form of a "dynamic compendium". Some members felt that careful monitoring of links posted on the website should be conducted to avoid controversial messages. A disclaimer could be added to serve this purpose.

40. The Secretariat provided an update on its planned publications in 2010, including various STDF Briefings and the Newsletter, and recalled that a questionnaire will be circulated in 2010 to assess the usefulness of the Newsletter. Development of an e-mail distribution list was in progress. The Working Group also recommended that the Secretariat closely monitor the development of the Global Trade Assistance Database (GTAD).

41. In conclusion, the Working Group supported the draft Operating Plan and decided to refer the plan – with minor changes - to the Policy Committee for final approval. In particular, the Working Group requested the Policy Committee to take decisions on two outstanding issues: (i) revision of the logical framework matrix to include an intermediate link between goals and activities; and (ii) decision on the next external evaluation of the Facility.

#### ***Review of STDF templates for projects and PPGs***

42. The Secretariat introduced revisions of the existing templates for PPGs and projects as a means to further improve the quality of funding applications. The proposed templates were approved with minor suggestions - including insertion of linkages to the EIF and other capacity building initiatives, consideration of SPS-related capacity evaluation tools, and linkages to official international standards. It was agreed to include these suggestions in the proposed "Guidance Note for Applicants".

#### **Presentation and discussion of STDF Policy Committee**

43. The Working Group considered and approved the draft agenda for the STDF Policy Committee meeting on 11 December, and reiterated its request to make decisions on two specific issues in relation to the draft Operating Plan (see paragraph 41).

#### **Exchange of information on SPS-related initiatives**

44. The Secretariat introduced the overview document compiling the information received prior to the meeting from Working Group members and observers on their existing and forthcoming SPS-related activities and initiatives.

45. The ITC briefly introduced its revised Information Pack on the "WTO Agreement on SPS: A Business Perspective", based on its experience and customization in Bangladesh for the horticulture, agro-processing and fisheries sectors under the Bangladesh Quality Support Programme. In addition, it briefed the Working Group on its supervision of the Yemeni Seafood Exporting Association (YSEA) in its implementation of STDF project 69. The final project report will be submitted in January 2010.

46. The United States informed the Working Group about a planned three-year technical assistance programme in Peru, aiming at developing and improving food safety, animal and plant health regulations and standards, approved under the United States-Peru Trade Promotion

Agreement. The programme will include working with Peruvian officials to help in efforts to strengthen key institutions in Peru and developing specific strategies to benefit from the SPS Agreement in order to be better prepared to meet new challenges. Counterpart agencies in other Andean countries could also benefit from this programme.

47. The World Bank referred to a collaborative agreement with APEC, which resulted from the Regional Agribusiness Trade and Investment Conference held in Singapore on 30-31 July, and the Food Safety Cooperation Network. The conference sought to initiate a multi-country, public-private long-term effort to stimulate increased intra-regional trade and investment in the agrifood sector of East Asia, including assured compliance with food safety, environmental and social standards. A complete list of World Bank activities would be submitted in January 2010.

48. FAO highlighted a planned conference on Nanotechnologies Applied to Food and Agriculture, to be held in Sao Carlos, Brazil, on 20-25 June 2010, for which is in the process of contacting a number of international and regional bodies regarding their interest to take part in and support the event. FAO also mentioned the preparation of a new Food Import Inspection manual, aiming at helping countries to develop an import control system adapted to their needs and resources, and a Guidance on Sampling, being developed in the context of contaminant monitoring and food safety surveillance programmes. In addition, FAO referred to the international technical conference on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries to be held in Guadalajara, Mexico, from 1 to 4 March 2010.

49. UNIDO referred to the Expert Group meeting on "Reinventing UNIDO's Trade Capacity Building Approach" held in November 2009, where trade practitioners from the private sector, researchers and key experts in trade-related technical assistance discussed the consequences of recent developments and trends in trade capacity building for UNIDO's activities in this area. Discussions focused mainly on food and agricultural products such as fisheries and horticulture. It also referred to a new agreement signed with the METRO Group on future work in Kazakhstan, Pakistan and India to enhance quality standards in production techniques, post-harvest practices and food safety. Finally, UNIDO briefed the Working Group on a planned conference about the role of agribusiness and agro-industries in relation to sustainable economic growth in Africa to be held in Abuja, Nigeria, during the first quarter of 2010.

50. UNCTAD briefly mentioned its work on food safety regulations, in collaboration with other partners; highlighted its SPS-related programs in selected ACP countries; and referred to its "Sustainability Claims Portal", which contains information about independent schemes that focus on agricultural sustainability. The Portal is expected to enhance the accountability of sustainability claims related to agricultural and food products, and enable agricultural supply chain stakeholders to better understand and evaluate these claims.

51. OIE made reference to the 4th edition of the PVS tool, which includes some new specific themes, the OIE Gap Analysis, guidelines on veterinary legislation, some training activities on aquatic animal diseases and animal welfare, and its work on laboratories. To date, OIE had received 100 official requests for PVS missions and had completed 91 missions. In addition, OIE was pleased to announce the first OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Legislation, to be held in Djerba, Tunisia on 6-8 December 2010, and invited the Secretariat to participate.

52. The EU referred to the second phase of the Pesticides Initiative Programme (PIP2), aiming at enabling ACP companies to comply with European food safety and traceability requirements and to consolidate the position of small-scale producers in the horticultural export sector. In September, the EU and the ACP Group of States signed a Finance Agreement for the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Programme, which includes PIP2, amounting to €32.5 million over five years.

### **Overview of implementation of on-going projects and PPGs**



53. The Secretariat reported on progress made in the implementation of ongoing projects and PPGs. All regular six-monthly progress reports of STDF projects, as well as the evaluation reports, are available on the STDF website. The Working Group was informed that a total of 37 PPGs and 37 projects had been approved by the STDF since its inception, with 53% of STDF project resources going to LDCs and OLICs.

***Presentation of issues arising by the Secretariat***

***STDF/PG/56 - Capacity building to enhance implementation of the Codex Alimentarius Code of Practice on animal feeding***

54. FAO informed the Working Group that an advanced draft of the Feed Manual was now available. It would be submitted to the Secretariat in the next few weeks.

***STDF/PG/65 - Develop a private/public safety control system for the horticultural export sector in Guinea***

55. UNCTAD informed the Working Group that a final report was submitted prior to the Working Group meeting. Mainly due to the country's political instability, some of the project activities had not been implemented. Hence, UNCTAD requested another extension of six months to finalize the project. It was agreed that the Working Group would analyze the report and respond to the Secretariat by e-mail with a deadline of 15 January 2010. On the basis of responses received, the Secretariat will make a final decision on the requested extension.

***STDF/PG/108 - Developing institutional capacity of countries in the Americas to participate in the SPS Committee***

56. The Working Group was informed about a request from IICA for an additional three-month extension of the project. The Secretariat explained that some activities were postponed due to a three-month delay in the second disbursement of funds, due to an internal miscommunication problem in the WTO. The Working Group agreed to the extension - but highlighted that this would be the final extension granted.

**Evaluations of completed projects**

57. The Secretariat presented the main findings and recommendations of the evaluation of project STDF 173 – *Assessing capacity building needs of food control systems in developing APEC Member Economies* – completed in June 2009 but not presented at the Working Group meeting at that time. According to the evaluator, the project was "instrumental in the dissemination of useful evaluation tools/training materials and in supporting the exchange of experiences among participants regarding common challenges, the functioning and structure of national food control systems". However, "the ways in which this would be reflected in the improved performance of the national food control system to provide a safe supply of food for consumers, and therefore, contributing to improved public health, is difficult to assess".

58. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the evaluator of project STDF 13 – *Development of Regional Action Plans to Enhance Veterinary Capacity in East and West Africa* – was currently addressing several shortcomings in the draft evaluation report identified by the Secretariat. This included a survey among the beneficiaries of the project and identification of possible follow-up actions. The final report will be discussed by the Working Group in March 2010.

59. The Working Group agreed with the Secretariat's recommendation not to continue the evaluation of project STDF 114 – *Sustainable and effective aflatoxin management system in Brazil nut production* with the current evaluator. The draft report received by the Secretariat highlighted

major shortcomings and illustrated that the evaluator was not capable of independently evaluating this project in accordance with OECD-DAC principles. The Working Group also agreed to contact Ms Luz Diaz, who evaluated project STDF 173 in a satisfactory manner, to carry out this work in 2010.

### ***Presentation of evaluation document***

60. The Secretariat introduced document STDF/205/R1 which captures the key lessons drawn from the evaluations of nine completed STDF projects and includes a set of recommendations. In short, the following actions were proposed: (i) improve the quality of PPG and project applications by changing the current templates, strengthening the proactive role of the Secretariat at the initial development stage of projects, and improving the review of PPG and project applications by the Secretariat and the Working Group members; (ii) organize specific training for the Secretariat on project design, management and evaluation; (iii) develop additional framework agreements on the implementation and supervision of projects, where appropriate; (iv) improve the dissemination of project results through the preparation of project fact sheets and via the STDF website; (v) review the existing "Guidelines for the evaluation of STDF projects"; and (vi) enlarge the database of suitably qualified persons to carry out *ex post* evaluations of completed projects. The Secretariat indicated that most of these actions were incorporated in the Operation Plan 2010-11.

### ***Decision on evaluations in 2010***

61. The Working Group agreed with the Secretariat's recommendation to evaluate four projects in 2010 (STDF 69, 133, 145 and 146) and not to evaluate three early projects approved in 2005 (STDF 10, 65 and 79). UNCTAD proposed to use its own resources to conduct an *ex post* evaluation of project STDF 65.

### **Review of applications received**

62. The Secretariat indicated that since the last Working Group meeting in June 2009, fourteen applications for project grants and PPGs had been received. Of these, the Secretariat recommended eight applications for consideration by the Working Group.

### ***Overview of applications not accepted for consideration by the Working Group***

63. Six applications reviewed by the Secretariat were not put forward for consideration at the Working Group meeting. These applications were either ineligible for funding or more information was needed before a recommendation on funding could be made. The Working Group agreed with the Secretariat's suggestion to include more information on projects that are not recommended for consideration in future review documents.

### ***Applications resubmitted from previous Working Groups***

***STDF/PG/172/R3 - Expanding exports of sesame seeds and sheanut/butter through improved SPS capacity building for private and public sector in Nigeria***

64. The Working Group approved the revised application for STDF funding - subject to several clarifications identified by the Secretariat and the Working Group. ITC requested clarifications on the budget (too high for administration and not enough for technical experts) and on the role of partner agencies in the implementation structure of the project. FAO requested justification on the possible impact on trade (50% increase in exports). The United States requested assurances with regard to the management and ownership of the purchased equipment. ITC expressed its interest in

supervising implementation of the project and agreed to work with the applicant to clarify the issues identified by the Secretariat and the Working Group.

***STDF/PG/283/RI – Support for SPS risk assessment in the mango export sector in Mali***

65. The Working Group approved the revised application – subject to clarifications on how the project will build on other actions, such as the EU-PIP2, which includes a traceability component. The EU pointed out that the majority of exporters in Mali are already certified and requested more information on the target groups. The United States suggested not to focus entirely on private standard requirements. The Secretariat indicated that the World Bank would co-finance this project and supervise the STDF component – provided that the World Bank and the WTO agree on a new Framework Agreement for the supervision of STDF projects.

***STDF/PG/301/RI – Implementing Salmonella Control Measures in Central America***

66. The Working Group agreed with the Secretariat's review not to approve the proposal at this stage - but to continue working with the applicant and the beneficiary countries to finalize the application for further consideration by the Working Group in March 2010. FAO and OIE highlighted that the proposal should outline appropriate references to the relevant international standards, codes and guidelines, and related work done by the ISSBs. OIE mentioned that Guatemala had not yet requested the PVS evaluation, while FAO indicated that the project may benefit from a value chain approach.

***Requests for project preparation grants (PPGs)***

***STDF/PPG/309 – Support to build an SPS management system in Guinea Bissau***

67. The Secretariat explained the background to this application in relation to the country's DTIS. The Working Group approved the PPG - subject to clarifications outlined by the Secretariat in the PPG review. FAO cautioned that working in the country may be difficult and stressed the importance of having a strong commitment from the beneficiary.

***Applications from or benefiting LDCs or OLICs***

***STDF/PG/242 – Building inspection, control and SPS certification capacity in Comoros***

68. The Working Group was informed that on-going consultations between the Planning Commissioner in Comoros and various donors on the ground would determine if STDF funding would be sought in the near future to co-finance the proposal. In that case, the application could be re-submitted for consideration by the Working Group in March 2010. Several Working Group members expressed reservations and suggested that the proposal needed further improvement before it could be considered again by the Working Group.

***STDF/PG/300 – Developing a combined e-Learning Curriculum and Information System on Food Standards as a contribution to up-grading the Quality Infrastructure in Developing Countries (Ghana)***

69. The Working Group agreed that the proposal represented an innovative approach to enhance access to information on food standards and improve the delivery of education and training in the country. It emphasized that the development of linkages with related initiatives and organizations, from the outset of the project, would be crucial for success. With regard to the content of the e-learning curriculum and information system, it requested clarification that official international food safety standards (Codex) would constitute the core information to be included. This includes SPS requirements on major export markets such as the EU, the US, and regional markets. The Working

Group approved the application for funding but requested the applicant to provide further clarifications as outlined by the Secretariat in its review of the application.

***STDF/PG/313 – Continuation of the West African Fruit Fly Initiative (WAFFI) in 2010***

70. The Working Group agreed with the Secretariat's recommendation to approve the proposal - subject to a reduction in the budget for miscellaneous expenses to 5%. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the World Bank and CIRAD would co-finance this project. The World Bank would also supervise the STDF component of the project – provided that the World Bank and the WTO agree on a new Framework Agreement for the supervision of STDF projects.

***Applications from or benefiting other developing countries***

***STDF/PG/286 – Best Management Practices to Reduce Interception of Quarantined Pest Species in Costa Rica***

71. The Secretariat reminded the Working Group that - according to STDF rules - this project would be able to receive up to 40% of the total project value in STDF funding - as Costa Rica is an Upper Middle Income Country. It requested information and guidance from the Working Group on possible ways to fund the remaining 60%, in case this project would be approved for funding. Canada suggested to contact the IADB, which may have resources available through a newly established Aid for Trade fund. The World Bank requested clarification on the specific SPS problems faced by the selected products and on targeted beneficiary groups. The Working Group agreed not to approve the proposal at this stage and to seek further clarification on the issues raised. It suggested the applicant to continue contacting other organizations for possible sources of funding. It was considered that the application could be re-tabled for consideration by the Working Group in March 2010.

**Decisions on funding and prioritization**

72. No decision on funding and prioritization was needed as the current funds were sufficient to cover the approved projects and PPGs.

**Other business**

73. The Secretariat welcomed Mr Rien Huige (Permanent Mission of the Netherlands) as the new chair of the Working Group in 2010 and thanked the outgoing chair, Ms Sofie H. Flensburg (Permanent Mission of Denmark), for effectively chairing the meetings in 2009.

74. The meeting was closed at 18.00.

## Annex 1

## List of Participants

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