

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STDF WORKING GROUP MEETING

2 July 2010

WTO Headquarters, Geneva

1. Adoption of Agenda

1. The Working Group meeting was chaired by Mr Rien Huige, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands. The agenda was adopted with no amendment. A list of participants is provided in **Annex 1**.

2. Overview of operation of the Facility

2. The Secretariat reported that the recruitment of a new administrative assistant is underway. In the interim period, the post is filled by Ms Paola Michelutti. Interviews are likely to take place in August/September 2010 and the position is expected to be filled before the end of the year.

Report and discussion on STDF meetings and activities

Technical working meeting on SPS indicators (1 July)

3. The Secretariat briefed the Working Group on the outcomes of this meeting, organized in collaboration with the OECD in Geneva on 1 July 2010. The meeting was attended by approximately 75 participants. There was agreement on the value of a results-based management approach to measure the performance of national SPS systems and on the use of the logical framework in this context. The importance of ensuring synergies with FAO, OIE, IICA and other organizations that apply SPS-related capacity evaluation tools – which include relevant indicators – was underlined. The findings of these tools provide useful baseline data and it was noted that some of these could be combined to form composite indicators for particular aspects of SPS capacity.

4. Participants agreed that the proposed pilot testing work on SPS indicators would be essential to ensure that country-level processes, practicalities and experiences are reflected. There was further agreement that one size does not fit all and that any set of "representative" indicators would need to be adapted by countries depending on their particular circumstances. The Secretariat noted that clear commitment from the government agencies involved in SPS management would be a pre-condition for countries to be included in the pilot testing exercise. The possibility of working with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa and elsewhere, as a way to reach member countries, could be considered.

5. The Secretariat committed to ensure close linkages with other ongoing and planned STDF work including on SPS action planning, the use of economic analysis to inform SPS-related decision-making and future planned training on project design and formulation in beneficiary countries. It would also post the presentations from the meeting on the STDF website, revise and distribute the draft working paper, and prepare a background note on the planned pilot testing work for discussion at the next Working Group meeting in October.

Workshop on public-private partnerships in support of SPS capacity

6. The Secretariat briefed the Working Group on ongoing preparations for this workshop, organized in collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and the World Bank, and to be held in The Hague, Netherlands, on 4-6 October 2010. The STDF, in collaboration with the World Bank, will take the lead on the substance of the event, while LNV will take the care of the logistics and an excursion to the Port of Rotterdam on 6 October.

7. A revised version of the background note on this event, circulated in March 2010, was presented at the meeting, as well as a draft provisional programme for the workshop. The Secretariat mentioned that it was in the process of identifying specific topics and speakers. Some had already been contacted and informally confirmed their participation. In addition, a desk study to identify, categorize and analyse examples of SPS-related PPPs will be prepared by an external consultant. Two possible candidates for this work had been identified and a contract would be finalized by mid-July.

8. An e-mail requesting information on SPS-related PPPs was distributed via the STDF's e-mail distribution list. Nine responses had been received to date, some with examples of PPPs and others expressing interest to attend the meeting. Members were encouraged to send their comments and suggestions on examples of PPPs, the draft programme, possible speakers, relevant officials from developing countries to be invited and funded, etc. to the Secretariat by 16 July 2010.

9. The Working Group overwhelmingly supported the organization of the workshop. Upon request, the Secretariat further clarified the co-regulatory approach, defined as "arrangements whereby the private sector provides infrastructure assets and/or services that traditionally have been provided by government" such as *Fundación Chile*, authorized to certify the quality of exported fruits and vegetables, as well as partnerships involving different segments of the agri-food chain in Canada.

10. Some members stressed the importance of focusing on partnerships working primarily on SPS-related capacity building, and wanted to have more information on the co-regulatory approach. The Secretariat recalled that the objective of the workshop was to raise awareness among participants about the potential value and role of PPPs, focusing both on capacity building and the co-regulatory approach. The objective would be to give advice on how to establish and facilitate PPPs in these areas, by identifying examples of good practice and lessons learned

Pilot testing project on the use of economic analysis to inform SPS-decision-making

11. The Secretariat introduced the background note on the planned pilot testing work on the use of the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) approach to inform decision-making on SPS capacity building and resource allocation. The objective of this work, which builds on the STDF workshop on the use of economic analysis held in Geneva on 30 October 2009, would be to enable SPS experts in selected countries to use the MCDA approach to inform decisions on SPS capacity building options.

12. The background note included a tentative work plan and budget. The Secretariat proposed to start the pilot testing work in two pilot countries in Africa in 2010, organize a regional training workshop on how to apply the methodology developed and share the results, and then to expand the work in two other countries in Asia and Latin America. Pilot testing work in countries would include close involvement of national experts and be linked to the STDF work on SPS indicators.

13. The Working Group strongly supported this project and agreed that the focus of the analysis - SPS in general or sector specific (food safety, animal or plant health) - should be further defined during the selection process of the pilot countries. The regional training workshop would also offer an opportunity to provide additional information and training on other recent or ongoing STDF work (e.g. climate change, coordination mechanisms, etc.). This, however, would not be within the scope of the pilot testing work *per se*.

14. The FAO suggested to pilot test the methodology through approved STDF projects. This suggestion was supported by all members. The Secretariat will explore ways to implement this work on a case-by-case basis to take into account particularities of each project. It was also highlighted that the MCDA approach would inform decision makers about SPS capacity building in general and that financial support for projects could come from external and internal sources.

15. The OECD suggested to build synergies with current its work and focus on specific pilot cases such as the meat sector in Latin America where the OECD is looking at non-tariff measures as trade barriers. Projects could be complementary and this would be a way to access the necessary data. The IPPC recognized the importance of applying the methodology at an early stage and informed the Working Group that it plans to apply the revised Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool in ten countries by the end of the year.

Regional Action Plan to control fruit fly in West Africa

16. The Secretariat reported on actions taken since the last Working Group meeting in March 2010 to monitor the implementation and mobilization of resources related to the Regional Action Plan to control fruit fly in West Africa. Limited progress was made by ECOWAS because: (i) a lack of human capacity; and (ii) a work plan focused on the overall implementation of the West Africa Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) rather than specific programmes such as the implementation of this Regional Action Plan. A joint WTO/World Bank letter was sent to ECOWAS in June expressing concerns over the slow progress made and urging the organization to nominate a person responsible for the implementation of the programme and for setting up a programme management unit. No reply had been received yet.

17. That being said, information was received from ECOWAS about a roadmap that was recently developed. According to this roadmap, implementation of the Plan should start in 2010 and internal funds (close to US\$1 million) had been assigned for this purpose. The Secretariat recalled the considerable amount of work and resources already spent to this initiative and noted that it would be crucial in the coming months to maintain the momentum. Several donor programmes, solicited in the previous months to provide support for the implementation of the Plan, may otherwise lose interest in this initiative. The Secretariat also gave an update on developments in East Africa where there would be interest in replicating the project.

18. The Working Group suggested to explore a shift in approach and work directly with institutions involved in individual countries instead of going through Regional Economic Communities. The experience in Belize could be used as an example of best practice in considering a different implementation approach. More specifically, the Working Group suggested to explore ways to work with the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE). As a specialized technical agency, ICIPE could coordinate its work with relevant NPPOs, ensure the use of regional expertise and exert some pressure on ECOWAS. The Secretariat agreed to explore the feasibility of involving ICIPE and shifting implementation modalities. It also agreed to report to ECOWAS on the concerns of the Working Group and to further inform the Working Group at its next meeting on 22 October.

Joint STDF/EIF training on project design and results based management tools

19. The Secretariat briefed the Working Group on a joint (STDF/EIF) training activity on 15-16 June 2010 on project design in the context of results based management. Staff of the STDF and EIF Secretariats (13 people in total) benefited from specific training on project design in the area of trade capacity building, including the development of logical frameworks. The overall objectives of this activity were: (i) to improve the ability of staff to assist beneficiaries in developing countries in designing trade-related projects; and (ii) to develop a training package for onward application and dissemination among beneficiaries in developing countries. The training was conducted by the Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT) of the University of Wolverhampton.

20. A concept note for pilot testing this training module in beneficiary countries was presented to the Working Group. The expected outcome of this activity would be an improvement of the quality of project concepts and proposals coming from developing countries. The goal would be to enhance "ownership" in project identification, development and evaluation. During the training, projects would be developed (including at least one SPS-related project) and could be presented to

donors. The EIF would take the lead on implementing this activity in four pilot countries, and include relevant SPS officials at national level. The STDF would be involved as a facilitator during this pilot phase. The Working Group supported and endorsed this planned activity and gave the green light to the Secretariat to become involved in this training at national level, in collaboration with the EIF.

21. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat also reported on other STDF/EIF collaboration issues, notably in relation to Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) and Tier II projects. Since the last Working Group meeting, the STDF Secretariat (and some STDF members) had made comments on three draft DTISs. Working Group members expressed their appreciation for receiving these drafts and the opportunity to comment on them. One general concern was the limited time available for comments. The EIF Secretariat proposed to give stakeholders a four-week comment period (i.e. 20 working days) where possible.

22. Since the adoption of Tier II guidelines by the EIF Board, LDCs can access resources from the EIF Trust Fund to finance priority trade-related activities, including SPS. To date, no country has formally submitted a request for a Tier II project to the EIF. The Secretariat reported that the EIF project coordinator in Senegal has given his assurances that a proposal for co-financing project STDF/PG/302 under Tier II is underway. This activity is scheduled to start in September 2010.

STDF participation in other organizations and initiatives

23. The Secretariat provided an overview of its participation in the following meetings and events:

- the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM5) on 22-23 March;
- an SPS seminar organized by the IDB in Guatemala (12-13 April);
- STDF project and PPG missions to Burkina Faso (27-29 April), Namibia/Botswana (3-5 May) and Senegal/Guinea Bissau (11-19 May);
- the 8th Conference of Ministers Responsible for Animal Resources in Africa, as well as a meeting of African CVOs, in Uganda (10-14 May);
- a training organized by the Codex Trust Fund for the Codex Near East region and meetings with the AfDB on the margins in Tunis (25-27 May);
- the OIE General Session (23-28 May); and
- the Board of Directors meeting of SSAFE (Safe Supply of Affordable Food Everywhere) in Vevey on 23-24 June.

24. The Secretariat reported to the Working Group that SPS issues do not seem to be very prominent on the agenda of the African Development Bank (AdDB) at this stage. This may be due to the AfDB's focus on large infrastructure projects and more generally limited capacity. Reportedly, SADC has approached the AfDB Trade Department regarding the development of an SPS action plan for the Southern African region. The STDF has offered its support for this work. In addition, AfDB regional strategy papers are currently under development, and the Trade Department is preparing the regional Aid for Trade review for Central African countries (scheduled for December 2010). The STDF is monitoring this activity. The Secretariat expressed hope that the AfDB would be able to make a presentation to the Working Group on its activities at one of the next meetings in 2010 or 2011.

25. The Secretariat also reported on its planned participation in a number of future meetings and events:

- Codex Alimentarius Commission (5-9 July);
- a side-event on SPS capacity building, organized by CABI, on the margins of the "Africa Agriculture Science Week" in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso 19-25 July 2010;
- a side-event on the margins of the UNSPECA Aid for Trade Ministerial meeting, organized by UNIDO, currently planned on 1-2 December in Baku, Azerbaijan; and
- the OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Legislation (7-9 December) in Tunis.

26. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that it had suggested that UNIDO contract Kees Van der Meer as a consultant for the preliminary work in the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (UNSPECA) countries. Kees van der Meer was one of the leading authors of a World Bank report, issued in 2007, on Food Safety and Agricultural Health Management in CIS Countries. At present, however, the Secretariat had no concrete information about the programme of this event.

27. Several members stressed the importance of raising awareness about SPS issues in the region (food legislation is based on former USSR legislation and the capacity for standards development is weak) and gave information about their current activities in the region. These included: SPS capacity building assistance provided to Kazakhstan (US); a food safety workshop for the CIS region (Codex); a meeting for CIS phytosanitary facilitators and a regional workshop to draft ISPMs in Russia (IPPC); and activities to strengthen veterinary services in CIS countries (World Bank).

28. The Working Group recommended that the Secretariat go ahead with the UNSPECA activity and to involve STDF's partners where possible. The Secretariat agreed to follow up with UNIDO on this activity and to report back to the Working Group on 22 October.

29. The Secretariat will also continue its collaboration with AU/IBAR under the PAN-SPSO project and participate in workshops and other meetings where appropriate. The next meeting of the PAN-SPSO Steering Committee is planned in October 2010. It is expected that the scoping study on national SPS collaboration mechanisms in Africa will also be ready by then. Finally, the Secretariat will participate in the WTO SPS Workshop on Transparency on 18 October 2010 and consider its involvement in three planned regional WTO SPS seminars in November 2010.

STDF website, e-mail distribution system and project fact sheets

30. The Secretariat presented the new STDF website, which was developed in close collaboration with WTO's IT Division. The STDF website was redesigned with a more contemporary look and is now more user-friendly. New features were added, either by improving existing functions or by adding new ones. More than 50 pages on the new website were shown.

31. The Working Group commended the Secretariat for its efforts to improve the functionality and look of the website and provided the following comments: (i) to explore the possibility of a linkage to the password protected website; (ii) to add links to donor websites and include a contact person for each donor country, and to consider developing a short template to include how SPS is managed by each donor; (iii) to develop a page with STDF projects and PPGs with a filter by geographic region; (iv) to further define the information to be included under "Activities of Members"; and (v) to include more detailed information on STDF projects and PPGs (photos, videos, descriptive reports, etc.) focusing on results achieved.

32. The Secretariat emphasized that the role of the website is to promote the STDF and exchange information and that further work on outreach and communication will be done. It highlighted the information already available on the website, i.e. project progress and evaluation reports, STDF annual reports, STDF evaluation reports and the Operating Plan for 2010-11, which includes a logical framework for the STDF. These documents capture some of the results achieved by the STDF.

33. The Secretariat suggested to the Working Group members to provide links to the STDF website on their own websites. A trial link to the new website would be circulated to the Working Group in the following week with a deadline (16 July) for further comments and suggestions. These comments will then be incorporated, where appropriate, and the new website would be launched by the end of July. At the next Working Group meeting, the Secretariat would further introduce a proposal on the second phase of this project (i.e. the proposed STDF "virtual library").

34. The Secretariat also briefed the Working Group on the new STDF e-mail distribution system (under "WTO news"). Two e-mails were sent in March and April 2010 to a wide group of subscribers and additional SPS stakeholders with instructions on how to subscribe to the system. By 23 April, 2,525 public users and 44 journalists were registered. By 25 June, these figures had increased to 3,051 public users and 56 journalists. The new STDF Newsletter will be sent to these subscribers within the next few days. E-mails to new SPS stakeholders (participants in training, business cards of persons met, etc.) - inviting them to subscribe - will be sent on a regular basis. The Secretariat will keep the Working Group updated on the evolution of this system.

35. In addition, the Secretariat reported on its efforts to present project information more succinctly to a wider range of stakeholders. Project fact sheets (one page) were being produced, initially for completed projects, and subsequently for ongoing STDF projects. These fact sheets will give an overview of the project and a snapshot of its (expected) results. This work was undertaken in collaboration with the WTO graphic design team. Special recognition was given to two trainees, Mr Mamadou Sarr and Mr Bernard Dlamini, for their involvement in this work. The Working Group fully supported the development of the project fact sheets and suggested to include information on the project's start and end dates.

Funding situation

36. The Secretariat reported on the funding situation. Taking into account outstanding commitments and including ongoing staffing commitments to the end of the year, the STDF currently showed a positive balance of CHF 1,863,132. It was noted, however, that the total value of projects recommended for approval by the Working Group at this meeting was higher, i.e. US\$2,285,325.

37. In 2010, contributions had been received from the European Union, The Netherlands and Sweden, totalling CHF 2,047,127. Japan confirmed its contribution for 2010. Germany announced at the meeting that it will renew its contribution to the STDF in 2010-11. Contacts with other donors are ongoing. The Secretariat highlighted that additional contributions will be required to ensure a proper and timely implementation of the Operating Plan 2010-11.

STDF Policy Committee

38. The Working Group agreed to organize the next STDF Policy Committee meeting on 3 December 2010. Partners were requested to inform the Secretariat whether they wish to host the meeting. A draft agenda will be tabled at the next Working Group meeting in October for discussion. Given that the term of the current donor representatives (Germany, Sweden and the US) to the Policy Committee would expire before December, donor members were invited to agree on three new representatives (in accordance with paragraph 10 and 22 of the Operational Rules).

3. Information exchange on SPS-related initiatives (STDF/WG/Jul10/Compilation)

39. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the presentation on the Global Technical Assistance Database (GTAD) was postponed since the database did not yet contain sufficient data. A presentation would be scheduled for October or early 2011.

International Trade Centre (ITC) – Non-Tariff Measures (NTM) Programme

40. The International Trade Centre (ITC) presented a project on classification of non-tariff measures (NTMs). This project had started in 2006 and evolved into a collaborative exercise with a multi-agency Steering Committee involving FAO, ITC, OECD, UNIDO, WTO, etc. The objective of the project was to conduct an analysis of existing NTMs and agree on a list of classifications. ITC reported that the final report would be ready by the beginning of September 2010 including a classification of 256 NTMs.

41. The scope of the NTMs was defined through survey questionnaires circulated to public and private sector officials in selected pilot countries. In Chile, work was conducted with Pro-Chile and a market research company was hired to survey data from private sector stakeholders facing NTMs. ITC clarified that information on NTMs was also collected from the public sector in Chile, as was done in Uganda. The objective of the exercise was not to cover all possible NTMs but to collect a representative number that would be perceived by the private sector in each country as potential barriers to trade. Survey results showed that problems were often related to measures of trading partners but also to lack of capacity to comply with these measures in the country.

42. ITC clarified that the list was intended to group a representative number of NTMs that were perceived as important by the private sector and transfer this information to public sector officials. Pilot countries were selected on the basis on demand and availability of funding. The main criteria determining the choice of countries were the following: (i) DFID priority countries since DFID was a major donor to the project; (ii) countries that were defined as a priority by the ITC Joint Advisory Group; and (iii) other countries where ITC is presently implementing projects.

43. The Working Group commended ITC for its presentation and underlined that the NTMs were based on industry perception and not exhaustive. Members supported the initiative and encouraged collaboration with other repositories of information on official regulations such as the FAO Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health. It was also noted that data collection should include NTMs that relate to private standards. This would further facilitate the task of the SPS Committee to outline specific constraints linked to private standards in selected countries.

44. ITC clarified that the data included references to private standards to the extent that these were NTMs identified as constraints by private sector stakeholders as constraints. The website (available in August/September) would include references to selected private standards by country and by company with a view to improving transparency. Further work will be undertaken within ITC to categorize obstacles and address these in the short and long-term by trade support institutions, private and public sector respectively. Finally, ITC suggested that survey data gathered from the study could be used to inform planned STDF pilot work on economic analysis.

Other initiatives of partners, donors and observers

45. The Secretariat introduced a compilation document with information on ongoing and planned SPS-related capacity building activities submitted by members and observer organizations.

46. The World Bank highlighted recent approval by its Board of Executive Directors of a loan of US\$100 million to China to support its efforts to enhance food safety and meet the increasing demand for higher quality and safer food by the Chinese population. The Government has made food safety a top priority in recent years and is taking clear actions to upgrade its food safety system.

The project will aim to help the Jilin Province to improve agricultural product quality and reduce safety risks. This will be achieved through introducing good agricultural practices, improving the implementation of regulations and strengthening monitoring systems.

47. More specifically, the project will assist in the development of new standards for good agricultural practices. These new standards include both legal minimum standards and detailed recommendations for farmers on best agricultural practices available ranging from appropriate cultivation practices, pesticide use, integrated pest management, post harvest practices, animal husbandry practices, aquaculture production practices, and the appropriate use of veterinary drugs. To increase the adoption of standardized good agricultural practices, matching grants will be provided to farmer groups and processors to set up 200 to 300 demonstration sites that use good agricultural practices to produce safer and better quality products. The project will also finance the upgrading of testing facilities and the enforcement system. The establishment of a risk-based agricultural product safety monitoring system will be piloted.

48. The World Bank also reported on a recent workshop organized by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and hosted by USDA on 17-18 June 2010 in Washington D.C focusing on aflatoxin control. Several key players (FAO, GTZ, IFPRI, USAID, USDA, etc.) attended the workshop. The event was initiated by findings of heavy contamination of aflatoxin in maize purchased by the World Food Programme from small farmers to alleviate poverty. The aim of the workshop was to establish the foundation of an overarching partnership to tackle aflatoxin problems. The partnership would be build on current efforts within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) and work in collaboration with regional entities such as ECOWAS and COMESA. BMGF had addressed letters to key partners and organizations to encourage them to participate in this initiative. The launch of the partnership is expected to take place by the end of the year at COMESA's Headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia. Members expressed strong support for this initiative.

49. The WHO provided an update on a new Food Safety Resolution adopted by the World Health Assembly. Food safety was on the agenda for the first time in ten years and the resolution highlighted the inextricable link between food safety, nutrition and food security. It provided WHO's "marching orders" to move the food safety agenda forward on a global basis. The resolution mentioned the need for collaboration between different sectors, underlined the need to further develop the emergency function of the INFOSAN network and stressed the need to provide technical assistance to decrease foodborne diseases. It also mentioned the development of a zoonotic disease strategy and underlined efforts to enhance collaboration between FAO, WHO and OIE.

50. The WHO also circulated a concept note of a project aiming to control mycotoxin contamination in sorghum. Sorghum is a major staple crop and important for animal feed and human consumption. At present, there is no Codex standard but interest in the development of such a standard was expressed repeatedly under the leadership of Tunisia. Given the insufficiency of current data to decide on the relevance of mycotoxins, the WHO was seeking assistance to assist countries in this endeavour. The European Union, Switzerland and the World Bank expressed their interest in WHO's concept note and encouraged other donors to become involved in this effort.

51. ITC highlighted that a document on ITC's SPS-related events was circulated to the Working Group. This included references to public-private partnerships.

4. Overview of implementation of ongoing projects and PPGs

52. The Secretariat reported that a total of 40 PPGs and 43 projects had been approved by the STDF since its inception. Overall, the STDF had devoted 55 per cent of project resources to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Other Low Income Countries (OLICs). No member raised specific issues with regard to ongoing projects and PPGs.

53. The Secretariat briefly highlighted progress made under STDF/PPG/305. This study, requested by the African Union Commission, was being finalized by the consultant and looked at the possible role of the RECs in the SPS area. The report will be finalized in July. As mentioned earlier during the meeting, project STDF/PG/302 was approved by the STDF for co-financing with the EIF. Finally, it was noted that no further comments had been received on project STDF/PG/318 benefiting Ecuador. The Secretariat had put the applicant in contact with the FAO office in Ecuador to finalize the proposal.

54. The Secretariat recalled that STDF/PPG/242 was approved for funding in 2008 and that a resulting proposal was submitted to the Working Group for discussion in 2009. The Working Group viewed the proposal as too ambitious and suggested two possible actions. The first action was to re-centre the proposal on the application of the OIE PVS tool and design an SPS action plan building on the PVS results. The second action was to narrow down the existing application on capacity building activities and focus on specific SPS constraints faced by sectors, such as lobster or litchi. The Secretariat suggested that US\$10,000 be used to redraft the proposal in consultation with the Government. The Working Group accepted the Secretariat's suggestion.

5. Evaluations of completed projects

55. The Secretariat introduced the evaluation report of project STDF/PG/114, completed in February 2009. The report concluded that this project had been the right answer to constraints faced by Brazil nut production chains and that it had contributed to narrowing the knowledge gaps, especially with regard to increased awareness on critical control points and other factors influencing fungal growth and aflatoxin production. One notable result was related to suggested changes made to the Codex Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Tree Nuts such as Brazil nuts. These changes were suggested by the Committee on Contaminants in Food for approval at the Codex Commission in June 2010. Brazil agreed with the conclusions of the external evaluation and thanked the Secretariat for its support.

6. Review of applications received

56. The Secretariat introduced the projects that were not tabled for consideration by the Working Group. It will continue to work with the authorities in the Central African Republic to finalize the development of an SPS Action plan for the Central African Republic (STDF/PG/308) in time for review at the next Working Group meeting. Similarly, the Secretariat will continue to work with FAO on project STDF/PG/321 (India/Bangladesh). The revised application did not address all the shortcomings identified by earlier Secretariat reviews. Finally, the Secretariat did not table a project benefiting horticulture producers in Uganda. Other projects (QUISP, PIP) were viewed to be better placed to address the constraints.

Project applications resubmitted from previous meetings

STDF/PG/301R3 – Implementing Salmonella Control Measures (Central America)

57. The Working Group agreed with the Secretariat that important elements were missing in the revised proposal. These included a lack of a robust logical framework, no description of complementarities with other programmes, a lack of overview of the SPS situation in the countries concerned, a lack of reference to the appropriate international standards, and lack of support from the countries concerned. The Working Group agreed to invite the Inter-American Development Bank to start the implementation of the planned needs assessments (for which only IDB funds were allocated in the proposal) as a first step, to identify the relevant sectors where Salmonella is of largest concern, and to re-design and re-submit a more detailed and targeted proposal for co-funding with the STDF.

PPG requests

STDF/PPG/328 – Developing Trade Opportunities: An Integrated Systems Approach for Pest Risk Management

58. The Working Group underlined the importance of using an integrated approach to risk management and the relevance of the approach for the region. The IPPC Secretariat recalled that it was in the process of developing its implementation strategy for the IPPC Capacity Building Strategy but added that it would not oppose the implementation of this PPG. The PPG was approved for funding.

Project applications from or benefiting LDCs or OLICs

STDF/PG/298 – SPS Capacity Building in Africa to mitigate the Harmful Effects of Pesticide Residues in Cocoa and maintain Market Access

59. The Secretariat recalled that this project resulted from a PPG application from five African countries (representing 75 per cent of traded cocoa internationally). The project addressed issues related to production, awareness raising, enhancing capacity to apply good agricultural practices, and strengthening regional collaboration. The Working Group approved the proposal for funding and determined that ICCO be the implementing agency. Since ICCO is an international organization with vast experience in implementing projects, the Working Group agreed that it would not be necessary to contract a supervisory agency.

STDF/PPG/320 – Development and Dissemination of Training Materials for Enhancing Biosecurity in Aquaculture Operations to meet SPS Standards in Low Income Economies in the Zambezi River Basin

60. The Secretariat introduced the proposal and recalled that it was submitted by the Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics and the Centre for Food Security and Public Health College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University, together with the Norwegian National Veterinary Institute, the Department of Fisheries in Malawi, the Department of Fisheries Resources in Uganda and the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Division. It was noted that a letter of support had recently been received from Namibia.

61. The Working Group recognized the need to enhance capacity on aquatic animal health issues in Southern Africa, including emerging issues related to Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS). Members underlined the importance of adequate consultation with officials in the countries most affected by EUS (specifically Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia) to ensure national support for the activities proposed and active involvement of the concerned stakeholders in project implementation. The Working Group welcomed the offer made by the OIE Sub-Regional Representative in Botswana to serve as a local hub in order to facilitate project implementation.

62. In light of the above, the Working Group agreed to the Secretariat's recommendation that the proposal be resubmitted for consideration at the next meeting. It was further suggested that the OIE consult relevant officials in key countries as part of a revision process to get their views on the proposed activities (including the preparation of educational (and video) materials and training workshops). The OIE further proposed that: (i) OIE be represented on the Project Steering Committee; and (ii) efforts be made to consult and engage expertise from the OIE EUS Reference Laboratory in Thailand.

STDF/PG/323 – Enhancing the Safety and Quality of Agricultural Products in Senegal (pilot phase)

63. The Working Group underlined the shortcomings of the proposal which addresses the issue of pest surveillance and application of good agriculture practices to enhance Senegal's potential in horticultural exports. These included lack of a sound logframe matrix and an unclear set of

activities. Despite comments and feedback provided by the Secretariat, IPPC and the PIP programme to the applicant, the proposal was not considered ready for approval. Given the proposal's potential, the Working Group granted a PPG. The Secretariat welcomed names and suggestions for consultants to implement the PPG.

STDF/PG/326 – A Southeast Asian Partnership to build Trade Capacity for Fresh and Processed Fruit and Vegetables Products

64. The Working Group approved this project submitted by Michigan State University (MSU), in collaboration with Can Tho University, Vietnam and Kasetsart University, Thailand, subject to two conditions. Firstly, the Working Group wished to see evidence of support from the authorities responsible for SPS management in Thailand. Secondly, the Working Group agreed on the importance of clarifying the nature and scope of the relationship and linkages between this project and another STDF project in Vietnam (STDF/PG/259), which focused on improving safety and quality of fresh vegetables through a value-chain approach. The Working Group agreed that there were clear synergies between these projects and that, as appropriate, training and other activities to be carried out under STDF/PG/326 should take account of, and link up with, related activities carried out under STDF/PG/259, and vice versa.

STDF/PG/309 – Strengthening SPS Capacity in Guinea Bissau

65. The proposal was based on a gap analysis conducted as a result of the application of the FAO biosecurity capacity evaluation tool. The Working Group recognized that Guinea Bissau's SPS capacity and infrastructure was weak, particularly in the fisheries sector. However, the Working Group unanimously found the activities of the project too ambitious. It recommended that the project be reduced in scope and broken into smaller pieces with a focus on: (i) assessment of SPS legislation, taking into account the regional obligations of Guinea Bissau as a member of UEMOA; and (ii) basic capacity building activities on SPS issues.

66. Members also proposed that the sensitization component be removed from the project. The World Bank expressed its readiness to co-finance a revised proposal with funding from the Trade Facilitation Facility. The Secretariat agreed to further consult with the Brazilian authorities in Guinea Bissau to ascertain the readiness of the Brazil Agriculture Corporation (EMBRAPA) to implement certain capacity building activities. IPPC highlighted that US\$250,000 would be sufficient to conduct the PCE tool and review national phytosanitary legislation. The Working Group agreed to recommend the applicant to revise the proposal for re-submission and consideration by the Working Group at its next meeting.

Project applications from or benefiting other developing countries

STDF/PG/319 – Strengthening the Food Safety Risk Assessment Unit in Colombia

67. The Working Group agreed that previous shortcomings related to sustainability aspects, lack of letters of support and lack of a consistent logframe matrix had been sufficiently addressed in the revised proposal. The Working Group approved this proposal for funding.

7. Decisions on Financing and Prioritizing

68. The Secretariat reported that no decision on prioritization was required since the available funds just exceeded the funds required to implement the approved projects and PPGs.

8. Other business

69. Under this agenda item, UNCTAD requested an additional six-month extension of project STDF/PG/65 to finalize outstanding project activities. The Secretariat informed that this project had

been given a final six-month extension in January 2009, that UNCTAD was immediately informed about this extension and that it had repeatedly written to UNCTAD afterwards to enquire about progress made. All the Secretariat's e-mails remained unanswered. The Working Group agreed not to grant a further extension and directed UNCTAD to return any unspent funds to the STDF. The Working Group also invited the applicant to resubmit a new proposal to finalize any outstanding activities, if needed.

70. The meeting closed at 4.15 p.m.

Annex 1

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