

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE STDF WORKING GROUP MEETING

29-30 March 2012

WTO, Geneva

1. Adoption of Agenda

1. The meeting was chaired by Mr Hugo Cameron, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Canada to the WTO.

2. The Secretariat welcomed Ms Nagat El Tayeb (Sudan), Ms Martha Byanyima (Uganda), Mr Sidney Suma (Papua New Guinea), Mr Davinio Catbagan (Philippines) and Mr Guilherme da Costa Junior (Brazil) as new developing country experts. The sixth expert, Ms Delilah Cabb (Belize), was absent due to personal reasons. The Secretariat also welcomed delegates from Rwanda, Solomon Islands and the SADC Secretariat as observers to the meeting (as agreed by the Chair of the Working Group).

3. The Secretariat requested Working Group members to confirm their participation in the meeting on time for logistical purposes and to facilitate its organization.

4. The agenda was adopted with three amendments: (i) project STDF/PG/358 was added under agenda item 5(a) since a letter from the OIE requesting the Working Group to consider this project application was received prior to the meeting; (ii) presentations of the evaluation of project STDF/PG/145 (agenda item 5(d)(ii)) to be conducted before the beginning of agenda item 3, due to the availability of the evaluator; and (iii) a presentation on the STDF Virtual Library project (agenda item 3(g)(i)) to be conducted after agenda item 3(g)(v). The Working Group also agreed to start the Friday morning session with a presentation from the United States on US efforts on food safety and capacity building, agenda item 3(g)(v). A list of participants is provided in **Annex 1**.

5. It was noted that FAO and WHO were unable to attend the meeting due to different views on STDF membership. Norway expressed great concern about the absence of FAO and WHO, and requested that the WTO meet with all of the partners to find a solution to this situation. The Working Group supported this proposal.

2. Operation of the Facility

(a) Report on the Policy Committee meeting

6. The Secretariat informed the Working Group on the decisions made by the STDF Policy Committee on 10 January 2012, including the adoption of the new STDF Medium Term Strategy (2012-16) and the revised Operational Rules. The Policy Committee also decided that a "light" mid-term review of the STDF should be undertaken in 2013, to assess progress in the implementation of the new strategy. A full evaluation should take place towards the end of 2015 or early 2016.

7. The Secretariat also informed the Working Group that the STDF Work Plan for 2012, agreed in principle by the Working Group in October 2011, had been finalized and circulated to members in January, following the adoption of the Medium Term Strategy.

(b) Presentation of Draft Annual Report 2011

8. The Secretariat provided a brief overview of the draft Annual Report 2011, which is structured along the five key output areas of the STDF work programme for 2011. STDF's activities in 2011 are reported in terms of their contribution to these outputs. The Working Group agreed on an

additional three week comment period (i.e. until 20 April 2012) for members to provide specific comments and suggestions, if any.

9. In response to written comments received from Sweden highlighting the need for a more systematic analysis of STDF results at outcome and impact level, the Secretariat clarified that the issue has been addressed in the new STDF Medium Term Strategy and that further analysis on project results will be undertaken during the year. This will include the development of project webpages and factsheets and a deeper analysis of the project results focusing on their higher level impact. A two-page STDF briefing note in this regard could be considered.

(c) Selection of developing country experts

10. The Secretariat briefed the Working Group on the selection of the new developing country experts. 14 candidates were recommended by Working Group members. The final selection was made by the Chair of the Working Group based on the criteria established in the Operational Rules.

11. The developing country experts attending the meeting further introduced themselves to the Working Group.

(d) Selection of vice-chair-person of the Working Group

12. Following an expression of interest, the Working Group elected Norway (Mr Lars Borezen), as the new vice-chair of the Working Group.

(e) Financial situation

13. The Secretariat reported on the financial situation of the STDF and commented on the information and figures in the annotated agenda ([STDF/WG/Mar12/Annotated agenda](#)). The financial situation of the STDF is currently good and there seems to be continued interest among several donors to contribute to the STDF. The Secretariat will continue to monitor the situation.

14. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the funding requested from the STDF for PPG and project implementation for consideration at the meeting amounted to over US\$ 9 million (21 applications were received), of which the Secretariat recommended a total of US\$ 4.7 million for funding. Available funds, together with expected contributions, would just allow the STDF to finance the recommended PPGs and projects, if all approved.

Agenda item: 5. (d) (ii) - Presentation of the evaluation of project STDF/PG/145

15. The evaluator of project STDF/PG/145 (Rwanda Horticulture Export Standards Initiative, RHESI), Mr Ralf Lopian, presented his findings and recommendations. In general the project was highly relevant and achieved its objectives. The project assisted Rwanda in adhering to the IPPC, setting up the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) and the development of draft legislation. These were major achievements which also documented the effectiveness of the project. The evaluator recommended commissioning a project evaluation as soon as possible after the completion of the project in order to get more precise results. Difficulties were encountered in contacting key beneficiaries and implementers due to high staff rotation. It was also recommended that phytosanitary projects should be based as much as possible on the findings of the IPPC-PCE tool. How to involve private sector stakeholders, especially in a country where subsistence agriculture is predominant, and how to take into account high staff rotation, should be considered when designing a project. Finally, for similar projects, ways to support the adoption and entering into force of the legislative framework developed by the project should be envisaged.

16. The evaluator indicated that if the purpose of an evaluation is to determine if a project has achieved its expected results, the work should be conducted during the year following the completion of project activities. However, if the objective is to determine the long-term impact of a project, an evaluation should be conducted a few years later. Results, however, cannot be attributed to a single project only but rather to a set of activities within various projects that build on each other, i.e. sequencing is important. As the project succeeded in setting up the basis for a sound phytosanitary management system, it is expected that other initiatives build on its results and market access for Rwandan horticultural products will eventually increase. The evaluator also suggested that a commitment from the beneficiary to keep its staff for a certain period of time after the completion of the project can mitigate the impact of the high staff turnover.

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

(a) Organization of STDF seminar on international trade and invasive alien species

17. The Secretariat informed the Working Group on the progress made in preparations for the seminar on International Trade and Invasive Alien Species (IAS), to be held in July 2012, on the margins of the WTO SPS Committee meeting. Due to the diversity of the topics to be presented the seminar will last one and a half day (12-13 July). A draft agenda was prepared in collaboration with the IPPC and OIE and can be found in the revised concept note ([STDF/Coord/340 - Concept Note/Rev.2](#)), as well as the draft outline of the background research study which is under preparation. Several case studies to be presented and possible speakers have also been identified. Online registration - through the STDF website - will open as of 16 April 2012. The Working Group was requested to provide further inputs and suggestions on the programme, if any, and to assist in disseminating information about the seminar.

18. Members expressed their support for the seminar and agreed on the importance of selection of participants. The seminar will be open to SPS delegates attending the SPS Committee, international organizations, development agencies and experts with experience in IAS issues. The STDF will fund the participation of a limited number of experts (approximately 20) from developing countries, in the following order: (i) STDF developing country experts (ii) speakers and discussants from developing countries; and (iii) other participants from LDCs and OLICs (if funding is still available).

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

19. The Secretariat briefed the Working Group on follow-up to the application of the Multi Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) tool in Africa and on preparations to test the MCDA tool in Asia. Return visits to Mozambique and Zambia to discuss and validate the preliminary findings of the prioritization exercise are taking place in 2012 with the support from USAID. Expressions of interest to apply the MCDA framework have been received from South Africa and from COMESA. Finally, the STDF has purchased 20 copies of the D-Sight software to be allocated to beneficiaries in developing countries expressing concrete interest to apply the tool.

20. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that two concrete expressions of interest to apply the MCDA tool, i.e. from Indonesia and Viet Nam were received. The Secretariat expressed a slight preference for the selection of Viet Nam because of a firm commitment from key stakeholders, its status of development and trade situation, a good basis of data and the existence of good contacts. Viet Nam also proposed to set-up a local team to take the lead on implementing the activity and offered to host the regional training workshop for Asian countries. The Working Group agreed to Viet Nam as the pilot country in Asia.

(c) STDF studies and publications

21. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that two STDF publications: (i) Use of Economic Analysis to Inform SPS-related Decision-Making (November 2011); and (ii) National SPS Coordination Mechanisms: An African Perspective (March 2012, in collaboration with NRI), had been completed and made available on the STDF website. They will also be circulated via the new STDF e-mailing list to be set up shortly (using "Mailchimp", see below). The Working Group was informed that the STDF issued two new Briefing Notes: (i) Prioritizing SPS Capacity Needs using Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (No 7, February 2012); and (ii) Enhancing SPS coordination at the country level (No 8, March 2012).

22. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that a pre-final draft of the study on "Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in support of SPS capacity" was circulated to members in hard copy for comments and suggestions. This study, prepared in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank, builds on the STDF seminar on this topic in October 2010 and examines a range of partnerships in the SPS area, highlights experiences and draws lessons for the future establishment and operation of SPS-related PPPs. The Working Group was also informed that the findings of the study will be presented and discussed in a seminar, organized by the IDB and the IPC, on Food Security and Trade in May 2012. A three week period was given to members for comments, before finalizing the study..

(d) Organization of a regional meeting on SPS frameworks and strategies in Africa

23. The Secretariat brought to the attention of the Working Group the revised background note on a proposed regional meeting on Regional SPS Coordination and Capacity Building, to be organized jointly with the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2012. The purpose of the meeting will be to reflect and agree on how to implement the recommendations from the STDF study on Regional SPS Frameworks and Strategies in Africa, notably in relation to the role and function of the AUC and the RECs in adding value to SPS coordination and capacity building initiatives.

24. In the light of the comments received from the Working Group at its previous meeting in October 2011, the Secretariat proposes in the revised background note (STDF 369 - Background Note - 160312) to organize a first meeting on the margins of the PAN-SPSO II Steering Committee (SC) meeting, to be hosted by AU-IBAR in the first half of 2012. It is also exploring the possibility of a second meeting, on the margins of a WTO Regional Workshop on the SPS Agreement for African countries, to be held in September 2012. The STDF would provide funding for up to two officials per REC to participate in the entire training week, including the second AUC/STDF meeting. The Working Group agreed with the suggested approach by the Secretariat.

(e) Collaboration with EIF

25. The Secretariat reported on its collaboration with the EIF. Comments were solicited from the Working Group on the SPS chapter of the draft DTIS for Bhutan, as well as on the SPS components of draft "Tier 2" projects for Burundi, Cambodia, Lesotho and Liberia. In the context of the EIF pilot workshop on project development in the context of results-based management, a training module on project development is under preparation by the Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT), in close collaboration with the EIF and STDF Secretariats. The final module will be published as a guidebook for use by beneficiaries interested in formulating and developing SPS-related projects on the STDF website.

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

26. The Secretariat introduced a background note on STDF work on SPS and Trade Facilitation (STDF/Coord/294/Background Note). As part of its 2012 work plan, the STDF intends to build on existing collaborative efforts with the Trade Facilitation Facility (TFF) in the World Bank and other relevant initiatives to initiate preparation of a global level event on this topic in 2013. The purpose of

the STDF work will be to raise awareness about the synergies between SPS capacity building and trade facilitation, and identify lessons learned and good practices to strengthen future work and technical cooperation in this area. The event would be organized possibly in collaboration with the World Bank and/or one of the regional development banks. The Secretariat requested from the Working Group inputs and comments on the background note, specific examples of linkages between SPS and trade facilitation, as well as expressions of interest to co-organize the event.

27. The Working Group supported the proposal for the STDF Secretariat to work on this topic and emphasized the importance of identifying the linkages between trade facilitation and SPS capacity, analysing specific examples of trade facilitation in the SPS area, considering intra-regional trade facilitation initiatives aiming to achieve regional economic integration, and enabling a focused dialogue among policy-makers and practitioners in the SPS and trade facilitation communities. The Secretariat would continue work on the background document and report to the Working Group in October.

(g) Dissemination of information

(i) Presentation on the use of on-line tools

28. The Secretariat presented the results of a survey circulated to the STDF mailing list on 9 November 2011. A total of 323 responses were collected and 91 per cent of the respondents noted that they would prefer to receive an electronic newsletter rather than a paper format one. To respond to this request, the Secretariat looked at different email marketing services and decided to purchase "MailChimp" to design email newsletters. The first STDF electronic newsletter would be finalized and circulated widely in the coming months. In addition, the Secretariat also purchased an online application tool called "Wufoo" to build and process online registration forms. This tool will be used to process registrations for the upcoming STDF seminar on international trade and invasive alien species. These simple-to-use and non-expensive tools will help the Secretariat to gain efficiency in its operations.

(ii) Continued STDF involvement in PAN-SPSO project

29. The Secretariat informed the Working Group about its involvement in the PAN-SPSO programme. The Secretariat participated in a meeting in Cameroon on 9-11 November 2011 organized by AU-IBAR, and shared the concerns expressed by Codex, IPPC and OIE over the formulation of the proposed activities of the planned Phase II of the programme. Some activities were duplicating other on-going initiatives, while others need further clarification in terms of their implementation. Strong suggestions were made but were not taken into account in the final project document. Nevertheless, the Secretariat suggested remaining involved in the PAN-SPSO programme to monitor its developments closely.

30. The European Union welcomed the commitment of the STDF and of the three sisters in the PAN-SPSO programme and expressed its appreciation to the comments on the evaluation of the first phase and on the formulation of the second phase of the programme. That said, ownership of the African Union in this programme is a key principle that the EU should also honour. The EU encouraged the STDF and the three sisters to continue sharing any further concerns on this programme directly with the EU Delegation in Kenya and to discuss them together with the other partners at the next project Steering Committee meeting.

31. The Working Group agreed that the STDF should remain engaged in the PAN-SPSO programme and express its concerns at the next Steering Committee meeting.

(iii) Regional Action Plan to Control Fruit Fly in West Africa

32. The Secretariat updated the Working Group on the Regional Action Plan to control fruit fly in West Africa, adopted in October 2009, following extensive work by the EU, the World Bank and the STDF. The Working Group was informed that ECOWAS has not been capable of starting the implementation of the action plan yet and that other programmes and initiatives to control fruit fly in the region or in other regions in Africa have emerged and do not seem to be within the framework of the action plan.

33. The EU mentioned that ECOWAS requested the EU Delegation in Abuja to finance a fruit fly regional programme under the Regional Indicative Programme of the European Development Fund. An Identification Fiche was submitted to the Delegation, discussed internally in DG DEVCO and approved internally on 28 March 2012 (the EC contribution would be around EURO 17 million). The next step would be the drafting and approval of the Action Fiche (formulation stage).

34. The Secretariat requested whether this new EU programme would take account of the work already done. The EU agreed to enquire and inform the Secretariat about this. The Working Group generally agreed that the STDF should continue monitoring developments in this area.

(iv) STDF participation in other external events

35. The Secretariat briefly informed the Working Group on its participation in other external meetings and events, since the last Working Group meeting in October 2011, and referred to the comprehensive list of events available in the annotated agenda ([STDF/WG/Mar12/Annotated agenda](#)).

(v) Dissemination of experiences and good practices

- Presentations from the United States

36. Dr Julie Moss from the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) made a presentation on the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF). The FSCF, which was established in 2007, is a venue where regulators can meet to strengthen food safety systems in the region. In 2008, the US launched the Partnership Training Institute Network (PTIN) initiative to bring expertise and resources from industry and academia to work with regulators so they could provide their perspectives in encouraging the use of best practices in food safety management and regulation. Since its inception six workshops have been held under PTIN.

37. In May 2011, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the World Bank and the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum to begin work on developing a Global Food Safety Partnership. In December 2011, a multi-donor trust fund was activated, specifically intended to address capacity building gaps in food safety through an open source Food Safety Academy. An initial pilot series of training programs are being developed in partnership with APEC under the Global Food Safety Partnership.

38. Dr Moss also made a presentation on the US Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and more specifically on Section 305, regarding FDA's obligation to develop a capacity building plan. It was noted that the FDA is establishing a process for recognizing the comparability of foreign food safety systems.

39. IICA noted that they had been warning their member countries of the very demanding nature of this new legislation. In his own reading of the legislation, FSMA demands requirements that are over and above HACCP in that countries will have to have a full backward and forward traceability programme as well as plans in place for controlling allergens. It was noted that IICA had already shared with the FDA a list of capacity building needs in member countries that had been identified from the application of the PVS Tool for food safety. The WTO noted that this piece of legislation had raised concerns from numerous WTO members in the SPS Committee and that it was likely to

remain on the agenda, and therefore suggested that further side events be held on the margins of the SPS Committee meetings.

40. Dr Moss noted that a public meeting would be held in the summer to discuss the section on capacity building in FSMA. It was suggested that the US look into the possibility of holding this meeting on the margins of the Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting in July.

41. The EU and other members underlined the importance of coordinating food safety capacity building initiatives through the STDF, including the new Global Food Safety Partnership. The Secretariat noted that it was following this new initiative and noted that the World Bank could present more information on this new partnership at the next Working Group meeting. The Working Group unanimously welcomed this idea.

Agenda item: 3. (g) (i) - Presentation of the STDF Virtual Library

42. The Secretariat presented a prototype of the STDF Virtual Library and showed some of the searching capabilities that had been developed. The Virtual Library is a central repository of SPS-related technical assistance documents (project documents, assessments, evaluations, papers, etc.). It is currently populated with around 800 documents from a variety of SPS-related sources. The Secretariat noted that a final version of the Virtual Library would be completed by the end of April/early May.

- Information from partners, donors and observer organizations

43. The Secretariat introduced document STDF/WG/Mar12/Compilation and provided a brief overview of information submitted by Working Group members on their specific on-going and planned SPS-related capacity building activities. The Secretariat briefly highlighted NRI's Agrifood Standards Programme (ASEC) which finished in March 2012. NRI informed the Secretariat that a second phase of this programme would soon be initiated with groups of partners in East and Southern Africa. If resources permit and NRI seeks additional collaboration through the exchange of information, it was noted that the STDF would be open to further collaboration.

44. ITC highlighted the recent publishing of the second edition of the book "Export Quality Management: A Guide for Small and Medium-Sized Exporters" and encouraged countries to customize the book at national level. The new book, developed in partnership with the national metrology institute of Germany (PTB), takes into account international trade developments during the last decade and builds on the success of its first edition that was customized in 15 versions to meet the needs of 18 developing countries through the addition of two annexes.

45. In addition to the written information provided in the compilation document, the World Bank noted that further discussions and a presentation on the new Global Food Safety Partnership could be held at the next Working Group meeting.

46. Germany noted that the study titled "Harmonisation and Mutual Recognition of Regulations and Standards for Food Safety and Quality in Regional Economic Communities: The case of EAC and COMESA" is part of series of publications that GIZ will do on regional agriculture trade in Agriculture. She noted that a similar study for ECOWAS was planned in 2012.

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

(a) Presentation of applications not accepted for consideration

47. The Secretariat gave a brief overview of the following PG and PPG applications and noted that further work needed to be done before they could be considered for funding by the Working Group:

- Support to the establishment and accreditation of a national laboratory to control pesticide residues (Madagascar) (STDF/PG/165).
- Developing an SPS action plan for the Central African Republic (STDF/PG/308).
- Strengthening Veterinary Legislation in Cameroon (STDF/PG/333).
- Prevention and control of aflatoxin contamination in Chinese peanuts (STDF/PG/355).
- Building Capacity of LDCs in Asia to Improve Compliance with OIE Standards on Aquatic Animal Health and Food Safety (STDF/PG/371).
- Strengthening the SPS implementation capacity of private and public sector in the implementation of SPS (STDF/PG/372).
- Strengthening capacity of the Near East Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO), and its Member States, to identify and prioritize phytosanitary capacity building needs (STDF/PG/376).
- Applying the code of hygienic practice for fresh fruits and vegetables on the small farms in state of Khartoum (STDF/PPG/373).
- Banana production for export (Sudan) (STDF/PG/374).
- National programme for the application of phytosanitary standards in Togo (STDF/PPG/375).
- Regional capacity building for the effective participation of SADC Member States in the WTO SPS Committee (STDF/PPG/379).

(b) Discussion of PPG applications

STDF/PPG/370 – Strengthening the Competent Authority Analytical Laboratory for fish/fisheries products and other potential agricultural exportable products in the Solomon Islands

48. The Working Group approved this PPG request subject to three conditions. Firstly, it was agreed that the proposal should address the various issues raised in the Secretariat's review and to agree, prior to contracting, on Terms of Reference for the PPG and international and national consultants. Secondly, the Working Group agreed that it would be important to clearly identify outstanding needs related to laboratory testing and diagnosis in the Solomon Islands, to assess public and private sector demand for these services, and to develop a business plan to ensure the sustainability of such services in the future. Depending on the scope of this work, the Working Group agreed to a possible increase in the PPG budget up to US\$ 50,000, if considered necessary by the STDF Secretariat. Thirdly, the Working Group agreed that during the implementation of this PPG, it would be essential: (i) to fully consider and address the lessons and recommendations of past projects (notably the EU-funded project, "Strengthening the Control Systems in the Solomon Islands for the production of Fisheries products for Export"); and (ii) to consult and engage relevant development partners and donors to avoid any duplication with other on-going/planned activities.

STDF/PPG/377 – Comprehensive Assessment and Development of a Project Proposal to Strengthen the National Plant Protection System in The Gambia

49. The Working Group approved this PPG request subject to a written confirmation from the IPPC Secretariat expressing its willingness to implement this PPG given FAO's absence at the Working Group meeting. The Working Group noted that the development of a Strategic Plan to address the capacity gaps of the plant health system should be a top priority. Members suggested that in developing a Strategic Plan and prioritizing SPS capacity building options, The Gambia could benefit from applying the Multi Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) tool. The United States kindly offered to provide any assistance that may be necessary to apply MCDA. The Working Group raised the allowable budget for this PPG to US\$ 50,000 in order to: i) apply the PCE tool; and ii) develop the project proposal. The Working Group recommended that the newly formed Gambia Food Safety and Quality Authority, which to our understanding will likely become operational by the third quarter of 2012, be consulted during the implementation of this PPG, where appropriate.

STDF/PPG/378 – Application of the Multi Criteria Decision Analysis Tool to inform SPS decision-making in Botswana

50. The Working Group decided not to approve this request for funding. While the Working Group was supportive of on-going initiatives in the SPS realm, it was agreed that some open questions remained, particularly concerning linkages between the work proposed under this PPG and other on-going work (including by the FAO, OIE and World Bank). In particular, the Working Group agreed that it would have been important for the application to pay attention to: (i) the findings and recommendations of the recent OIE Gap Analysis; and (ii) the on-going value chain analysis on beef, implemented by FAO in collaboration with the Agriculture Hub in the Ministry of Agriculture, which addresses requirements in regional and international markets. In light of the above, the Working Group agreed that if it would be possible to show that other on-going initiatives do not identify and prioritize SPS capacity needs/investments, then this application could be re-submitted to the Working Group for future consideration.

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

(a) Discussion of project applications

STDF/PG/242 – Strategy to strengthen the SPS system in Comoros

51. The Secretariat introduced this application and recalled that this proposal had originated from an STDF PPG approved by the Working Group in June 2008, which resulted in a proposal submitted to the STDF and discussed by the Working Group in December 2009. At the time, the Working Group viewed the proposal as too ambitious and lacking a strategic approach. The Working Group considered that the project in its new form is better able to establish an effective and sustainable SPS system in the Comoros and is also capable of supporting the Government's efforts in export diversification. The Secretariat noted that the application takes into consideration the relevant issues and priorities identified in the DTIS and in the framework of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been identified as the agency responsible for its implementation which would facilitate the involvement of other UN technical agencies (i.e. FAO, WHO and ITC). The Working Group approved this request.

STDF/PG/316- Strengthening of the capacity in the pre-border plant quarantine points associated with inspection and diagnostic services in Azerbaijan

52. The Secretariat introduced this application which was developed through an STDF PPG (approved in March 2010) aimed at strengthening the phytosanitary inspection and diagnostic services in Azerbaijan and implemented by FAO-IPPC. Although there was unanimous agreement on the importance and relevance of the project for the country's current needs, the Working Group noted that the project application still required further work. Moreover, it was noted that a convincing letter from the State Customs Service expressing its support to the project and specifically its willingness to

cooperate with the State Phytosanitary Control Service for border control activities, and a letter of acceptance from the World Bank to implement the project, should be submitted. The Working Group recommended that the request be revised and re-submitted for consideration at the next meeting, and requested the STDF Secretariat to assist the applicant in this process.

STDF/PG/323 - Improving the safety and quality of horticultural exports from the Niayes Region in Senegal

53. The Secretariat introduced this proposal and recalled that an application had been tabled for funding in July 2010 but was not approved. Given the proposal's potential, however, the Working Group at the time granted a PPG to assist the beneficiary in developing the project. The PPG was subsequently implemented with technical support from the IPPC Secretariat. Given the efforts from the Directorate of Plant Protection in the revision of the project and to possibly shorten the waiting time for approval, the Working Group decided that the project could be reviewed before the next Working Group meeting and be subject to electronic approval by STDF members after taking into account the following recommendations: (i) the log frame should be significantly improved; (ii) the budget should be revised to better establish the link between inputs and outcomes; (iii) the project must contain accurate estimates of certain elements such as the number of farmers trained, the number of samples and analyses performed, the number of units of equipment purchased, etc.; and (iv) the proposal should analyse past technical assistance projects. In addition to these recommendations, the Working Group noted that, if approved, a written confirmation from FAO specifying its willingness to implement the project would need to be submitted to the STDF Secretariat.

STDF/PG/335 - Strengthening the Capacity for Phytosanitary Controls of Floriculture Sector in Uganda

54. The Secretariat recalled that this project was developed under an STDF PPG which was approved in October 2010. A subsequent project proposal was tabled for consideration in October 2011 and the Working Group agreed that the applicant revise and re-submit the proposal. The Working Group noted that the revised project now addresses the concerns raised in October 2011 and therefore approved the request for funding. However, to ensure its smooth implementation, the Working Group recommended that the following changes be introduced to the project document: (i) the logframe requires fine-tuning ; (ii) some budget items require further clarification such as the Daily Subsistence Allowance for local participants attending the project's planned trainings and meetings and the payment for expert services for the implementing agency, CABI Africa; and (iii) it is recommended that the project make concrete recommendations on how to expand the outcomes of the project to other horticultural sectors.

STDF/PG/344 - Establishment of a Regional Virtual Food Inspection School in Central America and Dominican Republic

55. The Secretariat introduced this proposal which originated from a PPG approved by the Working Group in March 2011. The proposal notes that the region would benefit from having harmonized, modern inspection procedures conducted by properly trained food inspectors and food safety auditors. This request was approved subject to two conditions: (i) the receipt by the STDF Secretariat of the two outstanding letters of support from the respective universities in Guatemala and Belize; and (ii) a final revision of the log frame and budget to the satisfaction of the Secretariat.

56. Working Group members were enthusiastic about the possibility of the private sector being able to receive training through the Virtual School after the initial phase. This would not only contribute to the sustainability of the project but would also allow common technical and regulatory knowledge to exist between official inspectors and individuals in inspected entities, thus contributing to continuous improvement of the entire food system.

STDF/PG/354 - Improving Safety and Quality of Sri Lankan Fruits and Vegetables

57. The Secretariat briefly introduced this proposal and noted that it had been previously tabled at the June 2011 Working Group meeting. The Working Group considered that the revised version of the proposal adequately addresses the concerns raised at the first review and therefore approved the request for funding. However, prior to starting the implementation of the project, the Working Group recommended that the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) work with the International Trade Center (ITC) and the STDF Secretariat to introduce some changes in the project document related to: (i) editing the document to reflect ITC's implementing role; (ii) improving the logframe, notably in terms of the formulation of indicators and objectives; and (iii) revising the budget, taking into account the new management structure under ITC.

STDF/PG/358 - Improving Veterinary Legislation in OIRSA Member Countries

58. The Secretariat noted that this application had been submitted by the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA), on behalf of its member states, and had been considered by the Working Group in October 2011. Although this proposal was not originally on the agenda of the meeting, the OIE requested that the proposal be considered for funding at the meeting. In October 2011, the Working Group noted that the project would benefit from joint collaboration between the OIE and FAO legal experts and therefore, recommended that the applicant revise and resubmit the proposal in close collaboration with OIE and FAO. OIRSA prepared a revised version of the proposal that notes that close collaboration will be maintained with OIE and FAO during all phases of the project implementation. The Secretariat noted that letters were received from the OIE and the FAO regional office in Santiago, Chile expressing their willingness to participate and collaborate in this initiative. The Working Group decided to approve this project on an *ad referendum* basis with a two week time period for major objections. The Working Group agreed that, if approved, the project be subject to: (i) minor clarifications in the logical framework; and (ii) receipt of individual letters of support from each beneficiary country, prior to contracting.

(b) Decisions on financing and prioritizing

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

(c) Overview of implementation of on-going PPGs

60. The Secretariat introduced the overview document [STDF/WG/Oct11/Overview](#) which provides the implementation status of all on-going PPGs. It was noted that four specific projects (STDF/PG/155, STDF/PG/172, STDF/PG/259 and STDF/PG/284) had requested extensions for implementation without any budgetary implications. The Secretariat also requested an extension in the allowable time to contract STDF/PG/309 and STDF/PPG/346. All requests for extensions were granted by the Working Group.

(d) Evaluation of completed projects

61. The WTO suggested that STDF/PG/116 (Establishment of a traceability system for the livestock sector in Costa Rica) be evaluated as many countries around the world need to put in place traceability systems and an evaluation of lessons learned could be useful in this regard. The Secretariat recalled a previous Working Group decision which specified that if STDF/PG/313 (Continuation of the West African Fruit Fly Initiative) were to be selected for evaluation, then an evaluation of SDF/PG/255 (Regional initiative on the fight against fruit flies in West Africa) would have to be done in tandem since it was the first phase of STDF/PG/313. Therefore, the Secretariat suggested that these two projects be evaluated. The Working Group agreed to evaluate these suggested projects. In addition, two projects were selected by the Chair of the Working Group via randomized selection: STDF/PG/126 (Assistance to establish a horticulture industry organization in

Tanzania) and STDF/PG/287 (Information sharing initiative on the actions to control fruit flies in Sub-Saharan Africa).

6. STDF Operational Rules

62. Some members had indicated a desire to discuss further amendments to the STDF Operational Rules. The Secretariat had requested these members to submit any proposed amendments to the Rules in advance of the Working Group meeting for wider circulation to other members. No such comments were received prior to the Working Group meeting.

7. Other business

63. The WTO thanked the Secretariat for the new formats used in the review document and congratulated the Secretariat and the Chair on the selection of the developing country experts as they made very good and useful contributions to the Working Group meeting discussions.

64. The meeting closed at 4:00 p.m.

ANNEX 1

STDF WORKING GROUP

29-30 March 2012

Room E

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