

Side Event on Food Safety and SPS Measures in Africa

Hosted by France on the margins of the 32nd Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles
Organised by the African Union with the support of France and the European Commission
10th February 2021

MODERATOR'S REPORT - SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

A virtual Side Event on food safety and SPS measures in Africa was organised by the African Union with the support of France and the European Commission, on 10th February 2021, on the margins of the 32nd Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles. The main objective of the Side Event was to support the African Region's ongoing efforts towards facilitating food trade and ensuring food safety and food control in the context of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as well as the harmonisation of food laws by the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA).

The Side Event brought together a wide international audience. Her Excellency Dr Agnes Kalibata, UN Special Envoy to the Food Systems Summit (UNFSS21) gave the Opening Address, in which she emphasised the importance of the discussions as part of the preparatory process leading to the UNFSS21. The Side Event was an excellent opportunity to highlight the role of Codex in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to illustrate the important links between food safety and trade as well as development policies, based on the AfCFTA example. The Side Event enabled the fostering of intra-regional and inter-regional collaboration, cooperation and dialogue on food safety and SPS matters and it was an exceptional occasion to share expertise and experiences, exchange ideas and learn from best practices in order to address the challenges faced by Africa in the SPS and food safety areas.

Summarising the very interesting discussions, the moderator Mrs Awilo Ochieng Pernet, proposed the following recommendations and way forward:

- CCAFRICA and the African Union should take advantage of the showcased opportunities to increase intra-regional and inter-regional collaboration and cooperation and leverage resources in order to achieve the food safety and SPS-related goals of the AfCFTA;
- Harmonisation of national food laws with Codex standards is important and CCAFRICA Members are called upon to continue engaging effectively in Codex work;
- Codex Members and Observers as well as relevant regional and international organisations are invited to collaborate with CCAFRICA to develop and roll out a Road Map for harmonising food safety policy and food laws in Africa;
- Strong support for the implementation of the African Union SPS Policy Framework should be mobilised through high-level advocacy at regional and international events, including during CCAFRICA and other relevant Codex sessions;
- Codex Members and Observers should highlight the importance of food safety and Codex in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Codex Members and Observers should participate actively in the ongoing discussions in view of the UNFSS21 including the five Action Tracks as well as the Dialogues;
- Codex Members and Observers should contribute towards the development of the WHO and FAO strategies on food safety by participating actively in the consultation process of these texts.