



AFRICAN UNION
**INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCE**

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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the position of AU-IBAR. The contributions are primarily to galvanize information and experience sharing and to foster discussions.

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Foreword

In the continental effort to bring animal health to the fore, this 2020 second edition of the Animal Health newsletter highlights some of the initiatives undertaken in the latter half of the year. Following the launch of the Animal Health Strategy for Africa (AHSA), it has become essential to release an action plan to hasten the implementation of the AHSA for the next five years. Work towards that effort began with an expected release of the action plan expected in the coming months.

The 8-point measures of the AHSA action plan include:

- Advocating for significant public and private sector investments and stakeholder participation.
- Enabling policy, legislative, regulatory, and institutional environment for private sector investment and public-private partnership.
- Promoting intersectoral and multidisciplinary approaches such as One-Health Approach to address the interconnectedness of human, animal and ecosystem health.

With the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Policy Framework for Africa formally adopted in October 2019, there is work towards implementing the framework through the SPS project projected to begin in 2021. The project will seek to strengthen efficiencies in intra-African trade under AfCFTA by harmonizing SPS standards and border processes, sharing information and technical capacity.

The implementation of these initiatives is credited to our many partner institutions to fight against animal health issues and associated campaigns. The fight against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) received a significant boost with the launch of a part-

nership between six international and continental organisations to scaling up interventions.

The partnership was launched during the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2020 held under the slogan “Antimicrobials: handle with care.” It is the first agreement of its kind to combat AMR, threatening development and health in Africa.

AU-IBAR will continue working with stakeholders supporting animal health initiatives on the continent. Work has continued with the African Association of Veterinary Statutory Bodies (2A-VSB), which brings together veterinary statutory bodies (VSBs) in Africa, which was launched in Cairo in July 2018 to tackle the lack of regulation of the African Union (AU) veterinary profession. This entity also addresses the disparity in the training, categorization, and regulation of the practitioners and the profession. To ensure institutional strengthening of 2A-VSB, AU-IBAR provides technical support to formulate the 2A-VSB strategic plan to enhance member effectiveness and sustainability in policy and legislative advocacy.

We are highly indebted to our various stakeholders working with AU-IBAR to implement these activities through the Sustainable Development of Livestock for Livelihoods in Africa (Live2Africa) project, under the European Union funding.

Ahmed Elsawalhy
Director, AU-IBAR

AU-IBAR to issue 5-year action plan for AHSA implementation



The African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) will release an action plan to implement the Animal Health Strategy in Africa (AHSA) for the next five years.

The AHSA was developed by the AU IBAR and other vital stakeholders to harmonize the delivery of animal health services in the continent to enhance various interventions' efficiency and effectiveness.

It also aims to address the challenges affecting the delivery of animal health service in a harmonized way within the context of the One-Health approach - a collaborative, multi-sectoral, and trans-disciplinary approach for enhancing the well-being and interconnectedness of all animals, people, plants, and their shared environment.

Implementation of AHSA will improve capacity to anticipate and mitigate the negative impacts of

animal diseases, zoonosis, climate change, and disasters for healthy and productive animal populations.

The action plan to be released in April 2021 outlines practical measures and the feasibility of the successful implementation of the AHSA.

The 8-point measures include: advocating for significant public and private sector investments and stakeholder participation;

enabling policy, legislative, regulatory, and institutional environment for private sector investment and public-private partnership; and promoting intersectoral and multidisciplinary approaches such as One-Health Approach to address the interconnectedness of human, animal and ecosystem health.

Other measures to be undertaken are promoting the development and application of technologies that leverage on science and innovation for improvement of animal health systems for enhanced animal health; enhancing capacities for information and knowledge management to support evidence-based planning and practices; and Promoting innovative market orientation within the context of a safe environment for animal and human health,” reads part of the plan. Promoting risk-based interventions based on inclusive prioritization and stakeholder engagements and expanding other actors’ participation in animal health services delivery in the context of One-Health across the value chains have also been outlined in the plan.

The plan’s most strategic action will be to rationalize the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) involvement to ensure their effectiveness in terms of focus, minimize duplications of functions, and reduce burdens on the African Union Member States sustenance and foster anchorage with AU-IBAR.

This initiative will support the effective implementation of the Regional Animal Health Strategies (RAHS) in Africa’s five geographical regions.

To ensure cost-effective implementation of programme activ-

ities, the action will provide a close partnership with partners within the framework of Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LIDESAs), Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSAs), and AU-IBAR strategic plan to minimize duplication and promote concerted effort, synergy of action and complementarity as well as strategic use of available resources. The plan identifies RECs Animal resources units as the primary organizational mechanism through which States work together to ensure shared animal resources’ long-term sustainability.

It, however, notes that the organizations lack capacities to foster the African Unions’s regional integration agenda.

“Most RECs are experiencing difficulties in fulfilling their regional responsibilities. Animal health management at regional level is therefore mainly the responsibility of RECs but they often lack capacities and collaboration mechanisms to foster the regional integration agenda of the African Union,” reads part of the report. The programme will support the AU Member States’ existing initiatives, regional and international institutions, mainly OIE and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to strengthen the assessment, monitoring, management, and program improvement systems.

The member state-level approaches will strengthen national institutions, enhance assessment programs, monitor and evaluate, and support animal identification and traceability systems. Regional collaboration will increase the prospects of significant returns from improved animal resource production, transformation, and trade systems.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the AHSA programme will be con-

ducted at continental, regional, and country levels.

The main actors will include AU-IBAR and other continental/global partners such as FAO, Africa-CDC, and OIE at the continental level. AU-IBAR will take the overall oversight of the strategy. Actors at the regional level will include the RECs and regional partners, while at the national level will include the Member States, national multispectral partners, and actors.

Independent consultants recruited and financed directly by the Commission on specifically established terms of reference will carry out external evaluations in three stages - mid-term evaluation mission; a final assessment at the beginning of the closing phase; and an ex-post evaluation.

AU-IBAR will carry out annual audits. Besides, verifications may be carried out by the Evaluation Committee and relevant expenditure catered for under “Evaluations and Audits” at the end of the budget.

Other components of the action plan are communication and visibility, management of information systems, reporting, accountability, and learning processes.

The sustainability would be addressed by aligning the programme’s key activities with the CAHP-Africa and LIDESAs process so that eventual policy outcomes endorse the AU member states and promote inclusiveness through collaboration with the regional institutions of member states in programme implementation and creating expanded, broad-based programme steering committees.

2A-VSB Strategic Plan to Boost Operations of Veterinary Bodies

The African Union InterAfrica Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is supporting with the formulation of a strategic plan for the African Association of Veterinary Statutory Bodies (2A-VSB) to enhance members' effectiveness and sustainability in policy and legislative advocacy.

The 2A-VSB, which brings together veterinary statutory bodies (VSBs) in Africa, was launched in Cairo in July 2018 to tackle the lack of regulation of the African Union (AU) veterinary profession. This entity also addresses the disparity in the training, categorization, and regulation of the

practitioners and the profession. Lack of regulation and weak legal structures have been cited as significant causes of failure to comply with the World Health Organisation (OIE) guidelines on veterinary standards and substantial medical and veterinary bills for Africa. This situation has



led to a lockout of the African products of animal origin from the global market.

The VSBs also suffer from scarcity of resources for operations, lack of or insufficient autonomy, insufficient technical capacity, and insufficient resources to develop the bodies' technical ability and employees.

VSBs are supposed to register and license practitioners, accredit facilities, and take disciplinary measures against culprits, but discharging these roles has been difficult for many of them.

The 2A-VSB was therefore established to become a data repository for the VSBs in Africa, to support the establishment of VSBs in all Member States. AU-IBAR is betting on the association to enhance institutional capacities for VSBs through technical support and promote networking among them.

In the final stages of development, the strategic plan has been necessitated by Africa's ever-changing operating environment with the rapidly evolving policy and political landscape, growing stakeholder numbers and expectations, changing staffing structure and capacity, amongst other factors.

Significant developments are

also expected as the 2AVSB establishes its secretariat, independent from the AU-IBAR, which provides support as its secretariat. Therefore, the plan will help the organization have a strategic focus that enables it to capitalise on the new governance and other programmatic realities.

AU-IBAR kicked off developing the strategic plan in October 2020 with a call for consultants to bid for the project.

"At the end of the consultancy the 2AVSB is expected to adopt the strategic framework, building on the achievements brought forward as part of the establishment of the inaugural EXCO and General Assembly and cognizant of Africa's ever-changing operating environment," read part of the statement inviting consultants to participate in the exercise.

The plan will define 2A-VSB's vision, mission, strategic areas, and objectives, including priority focus areas for the strategic period and a sustainability plan taking with proposals for adequate financial and human resource strategies.

It will also map out key stakeholders and identify relevant strategies to engage them to advance stated objectives, outline risk analysis, management approaches, and draw a function-

al organizational and leadership structure for 2A-VSB.

AU-IBAR has led the continent to coordinate the development and utilisation of animal resources for human wellbeing and economic growth in the AU Member States, recording significant achievements.

During past experts meetings for VSBs, African Association of Veterinary Education Establishments (VEES), women's and youth's networks, AU-IBAR Director Prof. Ahmed El-Sawalhy noted that the rapidly increasing Africa's population has placed a lot of demand on the animal resources sector, hence the need to reengineer veterinary services to respond to emerging needs.

"We need to improve our veterinary education to produce the skilled and professional workforce capable of responding to the needs of the industry and the rapidly evolving global, continental and regional contexts," he told the experts meeting in Cairo, Egypt in 2018.

He reiterated that well-regulated animal health systems across the continent would be critical to efficient animal production and the facilitation of intra-regional trade, especially within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"At the end of the consultancy the 2AVSB is expected to adopt the strategic framework, building on the achievements brought forward as part of the establishment of the inaugural EXCO and General Assembly and cognizant of Africa's ever-changing operating environment,"

AU-IBAR embarks on the development of regional animal welfare strategies

The fight against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) received a significant boost with the launch of a partnership between six international and continental organisations to scaling up interventions. The partnership was launched during the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2020 held under the slogan “Antimicrobials: handle with care.” It is the first agreement of its kind to combat AMR, which is threatening development and health in Africa.

The partners cemented their collaboration with a joint statement by eight senior representatives on the first day of the WAAW Campaign for Africa, noting the “silent public health threat that AMR poses in all countries in Africa” and expressed concern for the “uncontrolled antimicrobial use across the African continent.”

Commenting on the partnership, Prof Ahmed El-Sawalhy, Director African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) said the institutions will work closely with AU organs and partners to advocate for greater political commitment, policies, laws and capacity building to enable long-term control of AMR.

“Antimicrobial resistance is a matter of concern for Africa because of the public health threat on African citizens and the negative socio-economic impact on wellbeing and livelihoods. AU-IBAR considers animal health as a critical aspect of continental development goal of ensuring public health and enhancing the competitiveness of its animal commodities for accelerated economic growth. As

a continental leader in animal resources development,” noted Prof. El-Sawalhy.

Antimicrobials include antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals, and antiparasitics and are used to prevent and treat infections in humans, animals, and plants. Antimicrobial agents have saved millions of lives, protecting animal health and welfare as well as food security. But their rampant misuse in health settings and agriculture is killing 700 000 people annually around the world.

In Africa, research findings estimate that 4.1 million people could die of failing drug treatments by 2050 unless urgent action is taken. While data on AMR are sorely lacking on the continent, there are signs that resistance to commonly prescribed antimicrobials is significant. Malaria, which kills 3000 children in Africa every day, is increasingly showing resistance to once-effective treatment options. Tuberculosis is becoming resistant to the drugs typically used to treat it. Current studies indicate that drug resistance to HIV increases and could cause 890 000 deaths by 2030 in sub-Saharan Africa.

The joint statement stated that people are buying antimicrobials of unknown quality in the markets and street corners and do not adhere to prescribed strict time intervals appropriate for drug-taking or dosage. The same happens in treating animal diseases coupled with underdosing, disrespect to drug withdrawal periods, and use of antimicrobials as growth promoters.

Dr. Nkengasong John, Director of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, said AMR threatens Africa's health, safety, and prosperity, hence the need for immediate and sustained action from governments and all partners across human, animal, and environmental sectors.

"Together, we can prevent infections, ensure antimicrobials are used appropriately, and limit the transmission of drug-resistant infections," he said.

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Director for Africa commented: "Antimicrobial resistance is one of the most pressing health challenges Africa faces. If we do not act now, we could see the continent roll back the gains in health we have made through immense effort and sacrifice. We must stop endangering our future and think before we pop a pill in our mouth."

The improper use of antimicrobial medicines enables bacteria, viruses, fungi, and microscopic parasites to mutate into superbugs resistant to the drugs designed to kill them. These superbugs can travel across countries, resulting in thousands, or potentially millions, of deaths.

The World Bank projects that the additional health care cost by 2050 could be between US\$ 0.33 trillion and US\$ 1.2 trillion.

AMR in agriculture reduces productivity, hinders the provision of safe food, and directly impacts food security and sustainability of livelihoods for farming communities. Improper disposal of pharmaceutical, hospital, abattoir, human and animal waste contaminates the environment with antimicrobials and antimicrobial-resistant organisms.

AMR is not only a health issue but a complex problem that requires a united multisectoral approach. The six organisations,

which entered into the partnership represent the public health, agriculture, animal health, and environmental sectors.

"We all have an important role to protect the efficiency of antimicrobials to ensure animal, human and environmental health. Each country needs to make the commitment towards ensuring antimicrobials are used prudently and responsibly; by applying international standards, guidelines in national legislation for the global harmonisation, surveillance and to control of unregulated production, distribution and use of antimicrobials," said Dr. Karim Tounkara, OIE Regional Representative for Africa.

The organisations jointly committed to 10 points of actions, including fostering a One Health approach and leveraging each organisation's core competencies. The other areas of collaboration include strengthening advocacy "for the more prudent use of antimicrobials" by increasing general public and medical practitioner awareness, understanding, and behaviour change; "supporting the integration of AMR action in routine infection prevention and control (IPC) measures as well as vaccination, farm biosecurity and good hygiene practices"; and "supporting compliance with international standards for the management of human, animal and industrial waste."

"We are at a critical time to change the way we use antimicrobials for humans, animals and plants and reduce the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance. If AMR is left unchecked, the next pandemic we face could be antimicrobial-resistant, and much deadlier if the drugs needed to treat it do not work," said Abebe Haile-Gabriel,

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Regional Representative for Africa.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean said the global community's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals has been slowed by antimicrobial resistance. "Countries and nations must work collaboratively to curb the emergence and spread of AMR by adopting a one Health approach, enhancing human and animal health systems, promoting integrated surveillance, strengthening infection prevention and control in healthcare and farms. Let us all unite to preserve antimicrobials to ensure."

Dr. Juliette Biao Koudenouko, Regional Director for Africa, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) noted that restoring biodiversity and ecosystems and protecting wildlife habitat is fundamental to reducing antimicrobial prevalence resistance in Africa.

"Healthy environment provides us with efficient mechanisms to prevent and control diseases which lead to less use of antimicrobials; as human beings, animals and crops are less exposed to microbes," said Dr. Biao.



World Animal Protection cautions Africa against industrial livestock production on animal welfare

The need to raise agricultural productivity to enhance local food security and boost supply to international markets has seen many African countries increase investments in various technologies and machinery.

However, animal welfare experts are raising the red on industrial animal production's impact on animal welfare even as countries pump more money in rural infrastructure, markets, and supply of agricultural inputs to make agro-industry a reality.

The Country Director at World Animal Protection Africa, Tennyson Williams, urges the continent to learn from the errors of regions where mechanised animal production has taken root and avoid the same in its quest to exploit the potential of agro-industrialisation.

He wants Africa to adopt better ways to enhance its food security and nutrition as mechanized livestock production subjects animals to untold suffering.

"Africa must constrain its animal production from getting mechanised to the extent that we will be faced with issues of animal welfare like what we are witnessing in industrialised regions like Europe, America and Latin America," said Tennyson during an interview.

"If you grow chicken in natural spaces where they have freedom of movement they will produce eggs which are healthier than those produced in cage system," he added.

Tennyson disclosed that the animal welfare organisation is set to implement a 10-year strategy from next year, focusing on global food systems to ensure the disruption of practices within the sys-

tem that allows for continued animal suffering. The strategy also seeks to improve in areas where it is possible for the food systems to better respond to animal welfare needs.

Treatment of farm animals is the world's biggest animal welfare issue as many countries adopt intensive farming to increase food production and save their populations from hunger and malnutrition.

It is estimated that by 2050, livestock production will be twice what it was in 2000. Right now, more than 70 billion animals are farmed for food each year – two-thirds in conditions that mean they cannot move freely or live naturally.

"We are campaigning for progress at every stage – from farming to transportation to slaughter. The majority of animals farmed for food live in conditions that cause suffering and stress, and it is time to rethink farming," notes Tennyson.

However, the Country Director is hopeful that the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA), developed by the African Union Inter-Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) will address animal welfare issues and still ensure the continent achieves full food sufficiency.

World Animal Protection participated in developing the strategy that provides a framework for the collective and coordinated promotion of animal welfare practices for responsible and sustainable livestock development on the continent.

The AU-IBAR is mandated to support and coordinate the sustainable development and utilization of animal resources (livestock, fisheries, and wildlife) to enhance nutrition and food security and contrib-

ute to the people's wellbeing and prosperity in the Member State of the AU.

The institution is working with the Regional Economic Communities (ERCs) to translate the AWSA into regional strategies – a programme that World Animal Protection says will be critical in animal welfare issues, which are unique to every region.

“It is easy to have a strategy at the continental level but it is also important to consider that Africa is not homogeneous and the peculiarities of every region can only be dealt with through a regional and national approach,” says Tennyson.

The organisation has been running campaigns against the industrial farming of chicken and pigs across the world.

World Animal Protection estimates that 60 billion meat chickens – also known as broilers – are raised for global consumption each year, with 40 billion chickens live in miserable, cramped, and overcrowded conditions, typically going from hatchery to slaughterhouse in six weeks.

In a report titled “*Exposing the secret suffering of chickens farmed for meat*”, the animal welfare organisation notes that demand for chicken meat continues to rise. Without intervention to protect the chickens industrially farmed to meet this demand, their widespread suffering will increase exponentially.

“Fried, roasted, boiled, grilled, chopped, pureed and liquefied... chickens appear both obviously and invisibly in food. Alarming, few consumers of chicken meat are aware of such suffering. Their mass production is one of the biggest causes of animal suffering in the world,” reads part of the report published in 2016.



Call for increased investment in food safety as COVID-19 pandemic rages

There is a need to increase food safety investment to ensure resilient national food control systems for consumer protection and safe trade. That was a call to action during the 2nd World Food Safety Day held virtually in June 2020. During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the celebrations were held to raise awareness and promote global food safety actions.

African Union (AU) Member States, regional economic communities, development partners, food producers, processors, and marketers attended the event themed COVID-19 Pandemic and Food Safety – Building resilient national food control systems for consumer protection and safe trade.

In a joint communique issued at the end of the event, participants called for risk profiling approaches to manage food safety risks and ensure attention and resources are realigned to operations classified as medium or high risk.

The participants also vouched for harmonizing inspection protocols across the continent to facilitate intra-African trade in food, reviewing existing regulatory frameworks, assessing the national food control situation, and using technologies in the execution of some regulatory functions limit the impact of future crises on food control.

“Aware of the need to promote safe trade in food, we encourage the use of e-certification and e-commerce to facilitate trade and avoid the impact of movement restrictions in times of crisis. The food industry should also increasingly become self-regulating by providing good regulatory framework and an enabling environment;” read part of the communique.

June 7th was designated as the World Food Safety Day during the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly held in December 2018. The session noted that improving food safety contributes positively to trade, employment, and poverty alleviation.

Last year’s event, organized at the continental level by the African Union Inter-Bureau for Animal Resources (AU IBAR) in collaboration with the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA), was the second celebration.

Prof. Ahmed Elsayalhy, AU-IBAR Director, hailed the role of farmers, fisherfolks, animal keepers, food manufacturers, government institutions, and various actors in the food supply chain in ensuring that safe and nutritious food is available to everyone.

Prof. Elsayalhy noted that 2020 had been a very challenging year and that no country had been spared of the challenges and impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The effects of the pandemic could result in about 200 million jobs being lost globally over the next 6 months and 40 to 60 million people could move into extreme poverty this year. In Africa, where most of our markets are informal and trading done in much social way, the negative impacts of the

COVID-19 pandemic on the informal sector could contribute to almost 66% of employment,” he said.

For the first time in 25 years, it was projected that Africa will experience a recession due to the economic downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Dr. Kimutai Maritim, CCAFRICA Coordinator, noted that the AU Member States are determined to reach out to state and non-state actors and those directly involved in food systems in the

region to raise the profile of food safety.

“These celebrations are about promoting awareness and influencing action by highlighting what everyone can do to ensure food safety along the value chain. To combat ongoing changes in climate, global food production and supply systems that affect consumers, industry and the world itself, everyone needs to consider food safety now and, in the future,” he said.

The international day was an opportunity to bring together various stakeholders to share information on the impact, challenges, and experiences in food control due to the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen efforts to ensure that the food we eat is safe.

It also provided a platform for fostering collaboration and promoting a community of practice among food control authorities in the AU Member States.



AfCFTA: SPS policy challenges limited continental trade on animals and animal products

The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in 2018 has increased trade opportunities for plants, animals, and food products. However, non-tariff barriers such as Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures still limit effective regional trade.

Some opportunities result from the rapid growth of the Intra-African agrifood market fueled by high population growth, rapid urbanization, and income growth. Intra-African food demand is projected to

increase by 178% by 2050. Africa's net food import bill is over USD 40 billion a year and is projected to reach USD 400 billion by 2030, according to World Trade Organisation (WTO).

International trade of animals like cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry, and animal products such as horns, hooves, honey, and beeswax is essential for global food security and foreign income generation. The SPS measures are therefore necessary to ensure that these commodities are safe for ex-



port and consumption.

The measures applied according to World Trade Organisation SPS Agreement are meant to protect human or animal life from risks arising from additives, contaminants, toxins, or disease-causing organisms in their food; and protect human life from diseases in plant-animal. They also protect animal or plant life from pests, diseases, or disease-causing organisms; and prevent or limit other damage to a country from the entry, establishment, or spread of pests.

However, an SPS Policy Framework Overview report by the African Union Inter-Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) points out that weak capacities for enforcement lead to increased illness from foodborne disease. Africa has the world's highest incidences of foodborne illness, claiming 137,000 lives a year and causing 91 million cases of sickness, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

"Weak enforcement of compliance measures, leads to a country being excluded from key markets while poorly applied procedures can result in unnecessary costs and inefficiencies in the trading," states the report published in August 2020.

The report identifies inadequate or non-existent infrastructure, capacity, and laboratories, weak coordination mechanisms, lack of awareness, and duplication of mandates among agencies as some of the challenges facing the implementation of SPS policy for Africa.

The slow pace in ratification of regional protocols, lack of clear continental institutional framework, and limited scientific data sharing among agencies have also made it difficult for African countries to properly implement SPS and achieve an expanded regional trade.

The SPS Policy Framework for Africa was formally adopted in October 2019. It seeks to strengthen efficiencies in intra-African trade under AfCFTA by harmonizing SPS standards and border processes, sharing information, and technical capacity.

The Policy Framework helps align African SPS systems with international science-based standards, helping to operationalize Annex 7 of AfCFTA, which protects countries from risks and facilitates trade. It also seeks to support more productive and efficient food systems on the continent to help countries meet rising demands.

"The Policy Framework addresses African food safety governance and capacity, strengthening prevention and surveillance systems for food hazards; and supports improved animal and plant health for farmers, food security and food safety for consumers, and market access for business owners. This ultimately leads to job creation and economic prosperity," reads the document.

It will also enhance opportunities to expand the intra-African trade of plants, animals, and food through strengthened public-private cooperation, awareness-raising, and resource mobilization.

AU-IBAR is in the process of developing an implementation plan for the SPS Policy Framework for Africa and identifying indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

Once the implementation plan is in place, the next steps will be to catalogue existing and planned SPS activities, identify gaps, priorities, and linkages within activities, undertake priority activities and scale up existing efforts.

AU-IBAR will also implement an information and communication plan for the SPS programme. The Framework, which will be shared with key stakeholder groups, will also consider monitoring and evaluating progress on SPS within the context of the Framework and link to existing indicators and reporting mechanisms.



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