

Report about the Regional Workshop on "Harmonization of Food Hygiene Inspections within Africa" Cairo (Egypt), 18th. To 22nd October 2009

<http://www.foodinfo-europe.com>

The workshop is part of a series of training activities addressed to the countries of North Africa under the title "Harmonization of food Hygiene Inspection within Africa" to discuss the following objectives:

1. train trainers in the understanding of the Codex Alimentarius Commission Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 4-2003) including the HACCP system;
2. train trainers in the application of a common inspection methodology to verify/audit the application of the above standard;
3. achieve harmonized understanding of the standard and inspection methodology amongst the representatives of the competent authorities and representatives of the operators;
4. promote the adoption of the said standards by AU as the benchmark for development of an official certification scheme for all food processing establishments on the continent; and
5. initiate the development of the proposed official certification scheme as the first integration mechanism on food safety for the continent.

Participants:

The workshop allows 20 participants addressed to attend from Sunday 18 to Thursday 22 from the countries of North Africa member states of the UMA (Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia) and Egypt, Additionally:

- Representative of EU commission (organizing party),
- Representative of AINIA Institute (collaborator party),
- Representative of Egyptian Food Safety Information Center EFSIC (technical assistant party),
- Representative of the African Union, the UMA and CENSAD

- Representative of private sector different Egyptian Authorities, Farms and Companies will be asked to participate in the plenary session of day 18. as follows:

- § **General Authority For Export & Import Control,**
- § Egyptian Traceability Center for Agro-Industrial Exports(e-trace),
- § Agric. Export Council,
- § **Central administration for plant quarantine (CAPQ),**
- § Egyptian Organization for standardizations and Quality(EOS),
- § Food Technology Research Institute,
- § Horticulture Research Institute,
- § Plant Pathology Research Institute,
- § Horticulture Export improvement Association (HEIA),
- § Ministry of Health
- § Noubaria Farm
- § Yara Farm
- § Unilever co.
- § Food technology Center (FTC)
- § Consumer protection Agency (CPA)
- § Food Safety Authority
- § World Food Program (WFP)
- § Chamber of Food Industries (CFI)
- § UNIDO

The workshop was run very smoothly according to the following program:

First Day 18th. October 09

09:00- 09:30am: Registration

09:30-10:00 Opening Speeches

The following were given speeches in the opening session:

- Ms. Sarah Olembo, Senior Policy Officer/ Rural Economy and Agriculture- Ethiopia
- Mr. Moustapha Magumu, EC Directorate General for Health and Consumers
- Mr. Amin El-Masry, UNIDO presenter
- Mr. John Doody , AESA Consortium
- Mr Jacky Le Gosle, DG SANCO
- Mr. Magdy Shehatta, World Food Program (WFP)
- Dr. Nabih A. Ibrahim, MOLAR

And her below a part of some speeches by:

Mr. Christophe Besse, Trade Counsellor, EC Delegation representative:

[Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen],

It is a privilege for me to address this Regional workshop, on behalf of the European Commission, in my capacity as Trade Counsellor of the EC Delegation here in Egypt.

First, I should mention that this is the third of twelve Regional workshops foreseen for this year and the next. Other two have taken place in Accra (6-10 July) and Brazzaville (21-25 September).

Other regional workshops are scheduled in various African countries with the view to covering the entire continent. My colleagues from Headquarters, who are here today, will provide more details later.

These workshops form part of a wider programme aimed at "training the trainers" to strengthen the sectoral policy know-how of the public and private sectors, which play a role in the Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) field.

We are honored to have here this morning [the Egyptian Minister Mr --- in charge of ---] to provide an opening address.

We also have representatives from:

The European Commission (Brussels) and EU Member States (France and Ireland)

The Africa Union Commission, AU Member States and Morocco;

The Union of Maghreb Arab (UMA) and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD);

The Food and Agriculture Organisation;

The Codex Alimentarius;

The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO); and

The food and farming industries.

Your presence here at this Workshop reflects the high importance we all attach to this event.

Second, let me recall that capacity building in the area of SPS is an obligation under the WTO / SPS Agreement.

It is also an essential element of the Economic Partnership Agreements which are currently being negotiated between the EU and a number of African countries and regions.

While these EPAs will provide the legal and regulatory framework for an improved market access of ACP countries to the EU, complementary measures will have to be taken to strengthen the supply capacity of African

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countries, to make sure they can actually benefit from improved market access.

Third, let me say a few words on the programme "Better Training for Safer Food".

Launched in 2005, the programme provides training to both European and third country officials responsible for checking that EU rules related to food, feed, animal health and welfare, and plant health are properly applied.

In providing such training, the EC also aims to help developing countries to improve their food safety systems for the benefit of their own populations and economies; with the view to improving their access to export markets, and also to stimulate regional trade.

The current specific programme "Better Training for Safer Food in Africa" was launched in early April this year, in Addis Ababa, by the European Commissioner for Health, Mrs Androulla Vassiliou, jointly with her counterpart from the African Union Commission, Mrs Rhoda Peace Tumusiime.

With a €10 million budget, the programme in Africa aims to promote compliance with international SPS measures as a key to facilitate bilateral trade, both within Africa and with the rest of the world, and increasing the protection of African and EU consumers.

The Better Training initiative is in keeping with our particular responsibility as the world's largest single market; the largest importer of products from Africa; as well as the largest donor of assistance to Africa.

It is one of the key deliverables of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy agreed by the EU and African Heads of State and Government at their Lisbon Summit in December 2007.

Fourth, and turning to today's theme, "Harmonisation of Food Hygiene Inspections within Africa".

In Europe we recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, which marked the first step towards the creation of what is today the European Union.

The Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) field, in particular food safety, emerged as a major policy area at European level.

In fact, it was one of the first areas to be fully harmonised, and one in which there have been many changes, challenges and successes over the decades, leading to the current integrated system that the EU enjoys today.

Over its 50 year existence, the European Union has evolved into a highly integrated marketplace in the area of agricultural products, where food must be safe – irrespective of its origin.

This evolution started from very distinct national systems in the SPS field, with very little uniformity in legislation or controls among Member States.

Trade in live animals and food products were subject to very strict controls, usually involving costly checks at national borders and certification from official authorities.

There were significant barriers to trade between countries. Thus, the change towards the current EU harmonised SPS legal framework and procedures was policy and market driven.

This progression required the building of a strong EU capacity to initiate and monitor the enforcement of these changes.

Africa is now undergoing similar changes.

Agriculture is a major economic sector, and SPS is central to trade and regional integration in Africa.

However, in each African country today, there are still several fragmented basic SPS rules, in addition to more specific laws covering different sectors leading to varying enforcement, monitoring and inspection of compliance.

This has negative effects on trade in Africa in general– for instance, it has been estimated that in some African countries, the average import procedure may take up to 124 days, compared to 12 days on average in an OECD country.

Regional integration would reinforce common internal markets and reduce undue customs formalities and control restrictions.

Plus, the likely inclusion of an SPS chapter in each of the forthcoming EPAs will intensify harmonisation.

All these factors are likely to accentuate the need for common principles for veterinary and official inspections, which are essential towards eliminating internal border checks in Africa.

No doubt, as the integration processes unfold, the need will arise to strengthen capacity to face up to the challenges. The European Union stands ready to assist in this task.

Thus, the Better Training for Safer Food in Africa initiative has arrived at an opportune moment.

Finally, a brief mention of the objectives of today's training. These are three-fold:

To enhance an increased mutual recognition between competent authorities within the North African region;

To facilitate the adoption of common understanding and common inspection methodology; and

To promote a common certification scheme as a first step towards a harmonized inspection on food hygiene standards based on international (Codex) and EU legislation.

So – it is my great pleasure today to welcome you all to this Regional Workshop, the outcome of which will provide us with an opportunity to reinforce our "joint cooperation" in the SPS field.

A follow-up regional training will be held in Morocco, March 2010, where we will take stock of progress.

I wish you all an inspiring and fruitful exchange towards the overarching aim of safer food for all through the progressive harmonisation of food hygiene inspections within Africa.

Thank you for your attention and your support.

Dr. Ali Soliman Head of Central Administration of Plant Quarantine representative:

Distinguished delegates and guests, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this workshop on Harmonization of Food Hygiene Inspection, in the context of Better Training for Safer Food in Africa

Food safety is an issue of national, European and international significance. It affects all countries and has a substantial impact on both public health and economic activity.

European and African consumers rightly expect and demand the highest level of safety when it comes to the food that they eat.

Moreover, it is an important occasion! Not just because it is not that frequent that the European Union and the African Countries join efforts to organise an event, but also because we hope this event will kick start a very fruitful relationship in the area of food safety and will strengthen the dialogue, cooperation and exchange of expertise between our two continents

A specific programme is now being targeted at Africa, with the view to promoting compliance with international SPS measures as a key to bilateral trade, both within Africa and with the rest of the world, and increasing the protection of African and EU consumers.

However, in each African country today, there are still several fragmented basic SPS rules, in addition to more specific laws covering different sectors leading to varying enforcement, monitoring and verification of compliance

Regional integration would reinforce common internal markets and reduce undue customs formalities and control restrictions

Plus, the likely inclusion of an SPS chapter in each of the Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and a number of African countries and regions, will intensify harmonisation and integration

It is therefore my great pleasure today to launch "Better Training for Safer Food in Africa, Workshop on Food Hygiene Inspection ", together with my colleagues , and of course with you.

The main objectives of this workshop are:

To strengthen human capacity by "training the trainers",

To help improve the national and regional framework towards harmonized systems; and this is hard work, but it is feasible.

All of those assembled here today are key to the progress required ahead of us, and I would like to thank you wholeheartedly for your energy and for your personal commitment

I expect the outcome of workshop's debate will provide us with an opportunity to reinforce our "Joint cooperation" and to review our Joint approach towards addressing African needs in the SPS field

I wish you all an inspiring and fruitful debate towards the overarching aim of safer food for all

Thank you for your attention and your support

Dr. Nabih A. Ibrahim Director of EFSIC/ FTRI/ARC and MOLAR representative:

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you all on behalf of the ministry of agriculture and land reclamation, to "Better Training for Safer Food in Africa" workshop. This workshop aimed at promoting a public- private partnership approach to food safety in Africa with a view to empower the competent authorities with increased control capacity and to encourage operators of food sectors in Africa. To improve their compliance with international food standards and to achieve harmonized understanding of the standard and inspection methodology amongst the representatives of the competent authorities and representatives of the operators.

Food safety and quality and consumer protection against food fraud relate to the basic human rights advocated by FAO and WHO which highlighted the Right to Food "the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food".

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That is why governments have a mandate to ensure food safety.

Finally, we hope a successful workshop.

Dr. Magdy M. Shehata Nutrition Consultant of the national office of World Food Programm (WFP) representative:

The workshop on better training for safer food in Africa is organized by the European commission, and funded by A.E.S.A, A.E.T.S., ainia, A.E.N.O.R, and F.V.I The opening session of the workshop was attended on behalf of WFP CO. A short speech was given by me, where attendances were addressed of WFP food projects implemented in Egypt (food security for GEI, school feeding, and micronutrient fortification programs). Appreciation was given to the Egyptian Government for hosting the workshop activities, and extended to the European commission for organizing the event. Finally she said "I would like to thank the organizers and wish you a lot of success!"

Mr. Amin El-Masry, UNIDO representative:

During the last 4 years, a successful project targeting the agro-industrial sector in Egypt has been implemented by UNIDO. The project, "Traceability of Agro- Industrial Products for the European Market (UNIDO/Etrace)" aimed at enhancing competitiveness, exports, product quality and safety and national image in order to support the Egyptian agro-industry to stand at a position to match the global economy. UNIDO/Etrace project provided technical and financial assistance to farms, exporters and other operators in the agro-industrial sector in their efforts to align their systems with the requirements set by the importing countries to avoid the existence of trade barriers. Traceability allows importers and authorities to trace all the steps taken during the preparation and distribution of food products, particularly in the case of health emergencies that require recall. This has a function as a risk management system that ensures transparency, improves supply-chain management and allows smooth and cost-effective exchanges of information.

- Technical and financial assistance were provided within the scope of UNIDO/Etrace project. Financial assistance was provided to Egyptian operators in the agro-business supply chain in the form of a traceability grant. The main purpose is to ensure that these enterprises can access, on a cost-sharing basis, required technology and know-how. A proposal of

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the financial component was developed; 87 companies were financially approved to start implementation, 82 companies signed contracts with approved suppliers with a total value of EGP 25 million (approx. Euro 3.5 million). All the beneficiaries received the hardware and software in addition to training and technical assistance on implementation.

- The technical assistance and training programs covered traceability concepts, Good Agricultural and Manufacturing Practices, food safety and quality management systems, product quality specifications, post harvest operations and pesticide knowledge management capacity building. A large number of agro-industrial exporters benefited from this assistance and were able to develop their systems and operations to cope with export market requirements. In addition, the project provided technical assistance to public institutions such as the General Organization for Export and Import Control, the extension department of the Ministry of Agriculture. The project provided also a number of trainings and technical activities to agribusiness associations of small farmers and operators.
- Since January 2009 till present, UNIDO provided bridging funds of Euro 203,000 to enable the continuation of the project operations on upgrading Egyptian agro-industrial value chain and exports in compliance with international standards and towards the institutionalization of ETRACE. This has also allowed the transfer of Egyptian know-how to other countries in the region strengthening south-south cooperation.
- During the current bridging phase UNIDO and ETRACE have developed three interrelated project proposals as follows:

Projects	Duration	Starting Date	Amount	Funding Source
- Programme to increase availability of high quality and safe food and reduce post-harvest	2years	August 2009	Euro 600,000	- Italian Government

losses in developing countries: Establishment of an agribusiness solutions, Traceability and Upgrading Excellence Centre in Egypt				
- Pro-poor Horticulture Value Chains in Upper Egypt	3 years	Sep 2009	US\$ 2,521,455	MDG Fund (Spanish)
- Upgrading the Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Value Chain - Access to Export Markets	4 years	July 2010	Euro 2,933,819	SECO (Swiss)

- Speech of Mr. Magdy Shehata, World Food Program (WFP) The workshop on better training for safer food in Africa is organized by the European commission, and funded by A.E.S.A, A.E.T.S., ainia, A.E.N.O.R, and F.V.I The opening session of the workshop was attended on behalf of WFP CO. A short speech was given by me, where attendances were addressed of WFP food projects implemented in Egypt (food security for GEI, school feeding, and micronutrient fortification programs). Appreciation was given to the Egyptian Government for hosting the workshop activities, and extended to the European commission for organizing the event.

Finally she said "I would like to thank the organizers and wish you a lot of success!"

10:00-10:30: Press Conference and Coffee Break

10:30-17:00: Presentation about “Requirements for the For Food Safety Management”

*From the Second Day 19th. October 09 to fifth Day
22nd. October*

The participants were divided into two groups to work in two parallel sessions:

12:00 - 14:00: Came back to the hotel and Lunch.

14:00-16:30 the participants divided into four Parallel sessions as follows:

§ Parallel session 1:

§ Parallel session 2:

§ Parallel session 3:

§ Parallel session 4:

In order to discuss and debrief all the aspects related to “**Requirements for the Food Safety Management**”

Also, in the third Day 20th. October the participants visited one of the production centers of School Feeding Project (SFP) in Ismailia Governorate and they gave the following notes:

- The following are not available:
 1. Thermometer devices to measure the temperature
 2. Separate openings for waste disposal.
 3. Enough air vacuums which lead to arise atmosphere temperature.
- Some of participants asked about the potentiality of implementing documented cleaning and pest control plans.
- Some of participants object to turning van on during work hours.

Finally, Discussion of key issues raised by working groups and adoption of final drafts and Remarks were taken place at the last day then the workshop was closed and honoree certificates were distributed.