



**SECOND (VIRTUAL) MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE FOR SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES AND
TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE**

WEDNESDAY, 6TH APRIL, 2022, 1.00-3.00PM SAMOA TIME

CHAIR: SOLOMON ISLANDS

OUTCOMES SUMMARY

1. The second meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade took place virtually on 6 April 2022 (WST) and was attended by the following Parties: Australia, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. Kiribati conveyed apologies for the meeting.
2. The meeting was chaired by Mr Francis Tsatsia, Director of Biosecurity, Solomon Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.
3. A representative from the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus Program (PHAMA Plus) attended the meeting as an observer as part of the Delegation of Niue. The two Observer States, Nauru and Vanuatu were absent from the meeting.

Opening formalities and Procedures

4. The Chair called the meeting to order and congratulated Tuvalu on becoming the ninth Party to the Agreement after their ratification came into force on 3 April. The meeting was opened with a prayer by the representative of Tuvalu.
5. The Agenda was adopted as presented. The meeting noted that the PACER Plus Implementation Unit (IU) would produce the summary of meeting discussions.

Agenda Item 1: Update since the first Committee Meeting SPS.TBT.02 of 10 June 2021

6. The Chair drew the Committee's attention to paper SPS.TBT.02/D.1 and invited the representative of the IU to present the paper.
7. The IU presented the paper which provided a summary of issues discussed during the first meeting of the Committee in June 2021. The Committee noted that since these initial meetings there had been some significant development which included the finalisation of the Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) Report, establishment of the PACER Plus Implementation Unit in Apia, Samoa, development of the 2021-2022 PPIU Annual Plan, and six (6) PACER Plus awareness workshops conducted by the IU in Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu. Furthermore, Tuvalu ratified the PACER Plus Agreement on 31 January 2022.
8. Parties welcomed Tuvalu as the newest member and acknowledged the participation of Tonga given the challenges and recovery from the events of January and acknowledged the work of the IU in the past year.

Action Items/Resolutions:

9. The Committee:

1. **Noted the progress report of issues discussed at the first meeting of the Committee in 2021.**

2. Agreed that paper SPS.TBT.02/D.1 be declassified for public release by the Joint Committee.

Agenda Item 2: Update from Parties on implementation of SPS and TBT obligations

10. The Chair introduced the agenda item to consider updates from PACER Plus Parties on the progress of national implementation of SPS and TBT transparency obligations under the Agreement, problems encountered with implementation and technical assistance that may be required for enhancing implementation. The Chair invited each Party to provide an update noting that detailed information was provided to the IU under the SPS.TBT.02/D.2 Annex I Questionnaire.
11. The IU received six responses to the Questionnaire in relation to transparency obligations under Chapter 5 and 6. Most Parties have updated Contact Points and have mechanisms in place to facilitate notification of SPS measures to other Parties and publications online. There are still some Parties that are in the process of developing these processes.
12. The following is a summary of updates provided by Parties:
 - a. Australia has implemented its transparency obligations.
 - b. Cook Islands advised their contact points are up to date. Notifications of SPS measures is in progress.
 - c. New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries advised that their contact point for SPS has not changed. Notifications of SPS measures are in progress and currently notify all changes on their website. The provision of specific information required from PACER Plus Parties is still in progress however all information is contained on their website. MBIE advised that the contact points for TBT will be the TBT National Enquiry Point and are using existing WTO processes to match the transparency obligations. Further work in progress to finalise transparency procedures for PACER Plus.
 - d. Niue Trade Division advised that their contact points for SPS remain up to date and were submitted to the IU. The information is also available on the Niue Trade Portal. SPS measures and standards on sea containers and TBT are up to date. Trade portals are underutilized by the Parties to facilitate notifications and transfer of information. Working with Biosecurity to complete Questionnaire and submit to the IU.
 - e. Samoa's TBT Contact points are up to date. Notifications and publication facilitation is progressing as they collect information and measures to be published on the trade portal. Samoa SPS contact point is up to date and officers are reviewing IPPC phytosanitary standards to align their national standards to international standards. Challenges include the mitigation of biosecurity emerging risks – would like to prioritise programs that address this issue.
 - f. Solomon Islands SPS contact point is the Biosecurity Division and has not changed and has been submitted to the IU. Notification of SPS measures is still in progress. Publication of adopted measures online has not yet started but should be notified through official IPPC and OIE websites. Information exchange is facilitated through biosecurity systems (ePhyto). Solomon Islands does not have a single body that deals with TBT however the focal point is the Department of External Trade. The TBT Contact point has been updated and submitted to the IU. The RNA has captured the challenges and technical assistance needed in terms of TBT.

- g. Tonga SPS contact points are up to date and TBT currently in progress to update. Challenges include not having the technical know-how or a dedicated person to carry out this kind of work. There is a lack of coordination between departments. Tonga is seeking capacity building support and development of a legal framework, and training for staff for publication measures. Tonga is currently trying to implement the ePhyto system. Challenges include shortage of staff, legislation of Tonga's Biosecurity bill. Line Ministries and regional agency awareness of current activities to develop electronic facilitation of ePhyto system.
 - h. Tuvalu advised that their contact points are up to date. Notification timing yet to be agreed upon internally.
13. Australia offered to assist, in cooperation with the IU, Samoa build capacity in preparedness and response functions.

Action Items/Resolutions:

14. The Committee:

- 3. Agreed to provide an update to the Joint Committee on the implementation of Chapter 5 and 6.**
- 4. Agreed to recommend that paper SPS.TBT.02/D.2 and Annex be declassified for public release by the Joint Committee.**

Agenda Item 3: Update on Country Implementation Plans for SPS & TBT activities under current FY2021-2022

15. The IU presented paper SPS.TBT.02/D.3 highlighting the eight SPS and TBT activities that were endorsed under the Annual Plan and Parties implementation. The IU noted the complications in implementing these activities due to the volcanic eruption in Tonga, tensions in Solomon Islands and the community transmission of COVID-19 in most of the member countries. There are some priority activities that have been identified for the remaining months of the financial year of which the IU will continue to work with Parties to implement. Parties provided the following updates on their implementation:
- a. Cook Islands noted work on capacity building and awareness for African Swine Fever which is a major risk to importers, which is a program under PHAMA Plus. A container hygiene activity will be undertaken in two islands in collaboration with New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture. Market Access work being done with local exporters and strengthen partnership between border agencies and private industry. These activities are to be carried out during April.
 - b. New Zealand supported the Sea Container Hygiene Awareness Programme and initiatives that promote the movement of clean sea containers, and they have and continue to make publicly available resources to support those initiatives. New Zealand is willing to extend this assistance where appropriate to Pacific members.
 - c. Niue noted a current project on container hygiene that PHAMA Plus is supporting which is currently trying to address container cleaning, and safety standards. While Australia and New Zealand require containers to be cleaned when they land in their ports, so as Niue as well, as we have received containers that are not cleaned.
 - d. Samoa noted the exporters training on standard operating procedures for export guidelines scheduled for March-April 2022 could not be implemented due to national lockdown. Support

from PHAMA Plus supported webinars on kava and taro exports to Australia. Will request for implementation in the next financial year.

- e. Solomon Islands have revised the activity list due to COVID-19. Solomon Islands have put in place capacity building activity for SPS and TBT measures on 1-28 April and support the Container Hygiene and export promotion activities. Solomon Islands have confirmed the following priority activities to be implemented:
 - i. Capacity building and product mapping activity for May to June
 - ii. testing equipment, training and certification from April to June.
 - f. Tonga confirmed no activities have been implemented thus far for SPS and TBT. There are 5 activities to be implemented (capacity building, export crops promotion and testing equipment). Tonga sought clarity on countries covered under the Sea Container activity. The IU confirmed that all Parties will benefit from this activity. Tonga is part of the enhanced Pacific access partnership with New Zealand MPI. For export crop promotion, Tonga is working with New Zealand on pineapple exports. Fumigation training started with DAWE Australia for watermelon exports however was not complete due to COVID-19 restrictions. Tonga advised that they are working with kava stakeholders to ensure quality of kava processing for export. Assistance may be needed for kava processing facilities to assist local kava growers.
 - g. Tuvalu have submitted priority activities to the IU and will begin implementation now that ratification has come into force for Tuvalu.
16. The Committee noted the update by the IU on implementation of Annual Plan for 2021-2022. The Committee noted verbal updates from Parties and agreed to continue working with the IU on implementation of prioritized activities.
 17. The IU acknowledged activity proposal requests from Tonga and Samoa and advised that all activity proposals received from the PACER Plus Focal Point of each country will be reviewed and submitted to the Joint Committee for approval in accordance with selection criteria for the DEC Work Programme.
 18. The Committee proceeded to adopt all recommendations contained in SPS.TBT.02/D.3.
 19. The IU presented papers SPS.TBT.02/D.4 on the Sea Container Hygiene Awareness Programme and SPS.TBT.02/D.5 on the Kava Pilot and labelling activity which the Committee considered and supported all recommendations contained therein.
 20. Australia supported the Sea Container Hygiene Awareness Programme and noted the close cooperation between the IU and PHAMA Plus on this work.
 21. On the Kava Labelling activity, Australia supported the proposal and requested for HACCP Australia to consult with DAWE to ensure labelling standards are correct.

Action Items/Resolutions:

22. The Committee:

- 5. Noted the updates provided by Parties regarding implementation of Country Implementation Plans for FY2021-22.**
- 6. Noted the information provided in papers SPS.TBT.02/D.4 and SPS.TBT.02/D.5.**
- 7. Agreed to the labelling support for kava and other commodities activity as set out in the Concept Note (SPS.TBT.02/D.5 Attachment A).**

8. **Agreed to provide an update to the Joint Committee on the implementation of SPS and TBT activities under the Annual Plan 2021-22.**
9. **Agreed to recommend for meeting papers SPS.TBT.02/D.3, SPS.TBT.02/D.4 and SPS.TBT.02/D.5 be declassified for public release by the Joint Committee.**

Agenda Item 4: Activity Plans for 2022-2023

23. The Committee considered paper SPS.TBT.02/D.6 and discussed priorities for SPS and TBT activities for the 2022-2023 Annual Plan.
24. Some Committee members provided comments on the paper and priorities for the next Annual Plan as follows:
 - a. Niue noted the importance of SPS measures. The focus is on agriculture commodities for exports and acknowledged that success will be measured by the improvement of exports to the New Zealand/Australian market. Niue advised that they continue regular engagement with New Zealand on biosecurity issues and would like to ensure these lines of communication remain open, and responses made as promised and agreed in good faith.
 - b. Samoa noted SPS proposals received from SPS national contact point (MAF) and have advised IU on these. Due to the national lockdown, priority activities scheduled for implementation for the next three months are to be deferred to the next Financial Year.
 - c. Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu have submitted activity proposals to the IU. Tonga will submit remaining TBT activity proposals to the IU by the next week.
25. The Chair advised the Committee to submit all remaining activity proposals to the Implementation Unit by 8 April 2022.

26. Action Items/Resolutions:

The Committee:

10. **Noted the process of finalisation for SPS and TBT activities for the 2022-2023 Annual Plan.**
11. **Agreed to submit to the Implementation Unit activity proposals for the 2022-2023 Annual Plan.**
12. **Agreed to hold an intersessional meeting to discuss the activity proposals for the 2022-2023 Annual Plan.**
13. **Agreed to recommend that meeting paper SPS.TBT.02/D.6 be declassified for public release by the Joint Committee.**

Agenda Item 5: Guest Presentation on Kava Labelling Requirements - Ms Eliza Gray, Senior Project Manager, HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) Australia

27. Ms Eliza Gray from HACCP Australia presented on the labelling requirements for exports to Australia. The kava labelling service that HACCP Australia has been providing to Pacific country exporters will continue under the IU kava labelling activity approved by the Committee.
28. The IU will circulate a copy of Ms. Gray's presentation and the DAWE Fact sheet for the Committee's information.

Closing Session

29. The meeting noted that the IU will prepare an Outcomes Summary of the meeting.
30. The Chair thanked Committee members for their active participation in the meeting and conveyed appreciation to the IU for the support provided to the Committee.

31. As per the annual Chair rotation schedule agreed by the Committee in 2021, the next Chair for 2023 is Samoa.
 32. The representative of Tuvalu closed the meeting with a prayer.
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*PACER Plus Implementation Unit, Apia, Samoa
25 April 2022*