

AID-FOR-TRADE: CASE STORY

SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL UNIONS

**SACAU's support to Southern African Delegates in
International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Attendance**



A Case Study on SACAU's support to Southern African Delegates in International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Attendance

Prepared for:

NPCA/WTO Partnership for Trade Promotion in Africa



NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
Agence de Planification et de Coordination du NEPAD

February 2011
Pretoria, Republic of South Africa

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List of abbreviations

CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CPM	Commission on Phytosanitary Measures
DFID	Department for International Development
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ISSB	International Standards Setting Bodies
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
SACAU	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SC-7	Standards Committee Working Group
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1. Executive Summary

In 2003, the AU adopted the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a framework for agriculture development to reduce food insecurity and poverty in Africa. The ultimate objective of CAADP Pillar 2 is to accelerate growth in the agricultural sector by raising the capacities of private entrepreneurs, including commercial and smallholder farmers, to meet the increasingly complex quality and logistic requirements of domestic, regional and international markets, focusing on strategic value chains with the greatest potential to generate broad-based income growth and create wealth in the rural areas and the rest of the economy. The Pillar agenda focuses on the required policy and regulatory actions, infrastructure development, capacity building efforts, and partnerships and alliances that would facilitate a smallholder friendly development of agricultural value chains to stimulate poverty reducing growth across African countries.

Establishing a regional agricultural forum for SADC has been a longstanding ideal in the region. The ideal was realized in 1992 with the establishment of the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU, essentially to represent the common interests of farmers in southern Africa on regional, continental and international matters. SACAU is a membership-based organization, whose membership is open to national farmers' unions and regional commodity associations in southern Africa. SACAU currently has 15 members in 11 countries in southern Africa and serves more than 2 million commercial and small-scale farmers. In addition it has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with UNAC, a farmers' organization in Mozambique, and has agreed to have similar arrangements with the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture. The organization is currently in the process of mobilizing regional commodity associations, such the Horticulture Council of Africa, SADC Cane Growers Association and the SADC Poultry Producers Association, into its ranks. The organization also has strong international links and is associated with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers. Finally, the organization is recognized by SADC, COMESA (with whom it has an MOU) and NEPAD as its main policy dialogue partner with respect to agriculture development matters in the region.

SACAU's operations are based on three strategic pillars, namely:

- Policy advocacy on regional, continental and international matters;
- Strengthening capacities of farmers' organizations;
- Provision of agricultural-related information to farmers' organizations and stakeholders.

SACAU has established an excellent working relationship with the SADC Secretariat. This relationship predated the project but has certainly been enhanced through the course of the project's operation. As an umbrella body representing farmer groups throughout the Southern African region SACAU was the ideal springboard to facilitate the regional standards initiative. ComMark thus provided a grant to SACAU who in turn used these funds to set the following strategy in motion:

A regional standards coordinator was appointed to: identify and fund regional delegates to attend meetings, build linkages to national SPS contact points, build linkages to the standards bodies, assimilate certain identified best practices, and assume overall management for the standards programme. SACAU established a standards function and

linked up with similar initiatives ongoing at the SADC Secretariat. The project thus expanded the capacity of SACAU to offer services as a regional farmer association. The regional standards coordinator disbursed grants to fund identified regional attendees to international standards bodies, and built relationships with staff of these bodies. When considering the effective participation of regional delegates at the meetings of International Standards Setting Bodies (ISSB's), attention to preparation and the empowerment of countries to substantively engage in the issues at hand on any given standards body agenda is critical. Some funding was thus available to provide a source of technical scientific advice to support meeting participation, beyond mere attendance. The technical participation to regional SPS contact points and the private sector was supported by a mentoring function, where suitable resource persons were contracted to assist delegates with technical issues in support of their attendance of standards body meetings.

2. Introduction

SACAU recently completed implementation of a DFID-funded project titled “*Support to the southern African agriculture sector to improve its ability to participate in international standards setting bodies – making trade standards work for the poor*”. The project was implemented under a grant agreement with the ComMark Trust (a grant manager for DFID) as part of ComMark’s Regional Standards Programme (RSP). The objective of the ComMark’s programme was to help SADC countries improve their long term ability to meet the grades and standards requirements for high value agricultural export products and thereby enhance their capacity to trade both internationally and within the SADC region.

In designing the RSP, it was established through intensive interviews within the region and the wider international trade community that where developing countries participate in the work of international standard setting bodies, they are not only better able to comply with new standards but also better able to harmonize their national standards with international ones. One of the areas of intervention was the area of developing country participation in the work of the International Standards Setting Bodies.

In January 2007 the ComMark Trust, entered into a partnership with SACAU as a delivery agency for this element of the Regional Standards Programme via a project designed to provide support to the Southern African agricultural sector to improve its ability to participate in international standards setting bodies, and in so doing making these trade standards work for the poor.

The purpose of the project component implemented by SACAU was to enhance the participation of Southern African countries in international standards setting bodies (ISSBs) by hosting the function of a Regional Standards Coordinator for the Southern African region and establishing the institutional mechanisms for liaison with public and private persons representing Southern African countries at these ISSBs. The duration of the project was about three years, starting from January 2007 until 30 March 2010. In practice, SACAU has worked with the full-range of standards bodies and supported a large number of Southern African delegates attend international meetings. It has also developed a sound working relationship with the SADC Secretariat and coordinated a number of joint activities, thereby leveraging resources and impacts.

This case study¹ serves to illustrate through the principal activities that SACAU has been responsible for, the positive impact this activity has had on strengthening the overall institutional environment for improved SADC participation in international standards setting bodies. The example that will form the basis of the case study is SADC member country participation in the International Plant Protection Convention (the IPPC) and its annual Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (the CPM). This has been done with reference to a range of project documents from IPPC minutes to back to office reports of delegates to IPPC meetings. In addition a series of expert stakeholder interviews were conducted to reflect a ‘human dimension’ which is often absent in officially drafted documentation.

¹ This case study is largely based on an original case study on the same topic that was prepared for ComMark Trust by Trade Law in 2009 titled “ A case study on the success of the SACAU IPPC attendance support function under the ComMark Regional Standards Programme”

3. The Importance of an International Voice

From 2007 to March 2010, SACAU has supported Southern Africa's development of long term capacity to meaningfully participate and contribute to the international standard setting processes for agriculture and food products.

Pre-inception interviews conducted in the region and with the secretariats of international standard setting bodies, and subsequent experience, has confirmed the premise that where developing countries participate in the work of international standard setting bodies, they are not only better able to comply with new standards but also better ensure improved international harmonisation with their own domestic standards. To this end the most effective participation is fostered by established domestic institutional arrangements that provide ongoing attention to standards setting in the food chain, as opposed to the historically more observed situation of sporadic reactionary work in the face of crisis conditions. It is for this reason that a structured and ongoing scheme of support for international standard body participation is a sound strategy in realising pro-poor outcomes.

In addition these strategies need to have a regional focus as the very nature of modern international trade negotiation is premised upon negotiating alliances and an alignment of negotiating interests between like minded countries. This is certainly true at international forums, but is allied to the reality that regional integration within the Southern African region is a reality under the SADC Treaty. As SADC moves towards a free trade area in 2015, following the conclusion of a customs union in 2010, harmonized food trade standards will be critical in realizing the gains from trade envisaged in the SADC Treaty. This local harmonization necessitates a wider coherence in the expression of a common view and action with common purpose on international forums. If SADC is to harmonize standards effectively as a region, it needs to have a standardized message and a united voice in the international standards setting bodies. As a practical example a regional plant protection expert has noted that as part of SACAU's work that issues of alien invasive species that could invade local forests are enormous and require the input of National Plant Protection Organizations to create the necessary linkages with all those involved regionally as new pest entrants into the wild will not be detected until vast areas have been spoiled, with pests being oblivious to regional borders.

Prior to the commencement of the project the analysis conducted by ComMark suggested that:

- Building relationships with the ISSB secretariats and, where applicable, their participation funding mechanisms, would be critical in leveraging the project spend.
- Identifying and building a relationship with the national SPS contact points would be critical in establishing the linkage to domestic SPS structures that are needed to support and empower ISSB participants.
- The SADC regions participation in standards bodies was low, but certainly not absent. This indicated that there was indeed a useful basis to work from.
- Pre-existing participation was mostly at a plenary level with much lower participation at a detailed scientific technical level.
- Some countries had been unsuccessful in accessing existing attendance grants as their applications were late or deficient.
- Private sector participation in tandem with government officials was low, but where present highly effective.

4. International Standard Setting Bodies

The whole point of pursuing the enhancement of Southern African contributions at the international standard setting bodies was to raise the levels of agricultural exports from the region. In order to do this, countries have to minimize any disguised restrictions on international trade that they may face. The departure for doing this in the food and agriculture trade arena is the World Trade Organization (WTO) via its Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement). The SPS Agreement, while permitting governments to maintain appropriate sanitary and phytosanitary protection, reduces possible arbitrariness of decisions and encourages consistent decision making. It requires that sanitary and phytosanitary measures be applied for no other purpose than that of ensuring food safety and animal and plant health with the prime objective of avoiding being disguised restrictions on international trade.

The WTO SPS Agreement encourages governments to establish national SPS measures consistent with international standards, guidelines and recommendations and to practice harmonization of standards. The WTO however does not develop these SPS standards. For this the WTO Members participate in the development of these standards in other international bodies. The preamble to the SPS Agreement specifically identifies three international standard setting bodies, one of these being the International Plant Protection Convention or 'IPPC'. It is in this context that the participation of Southern African countries in the activities of the IPPC gains its prominence, relevance and legal imperative.

a) The International Plant Protection Convention ('IPPC')

The essential function of the IPPC is to ensure common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products. The Convention also provides a platform for promoting appropriate measures for their control.

The IPPC was brought into being via the FAO Conference in 1999 and has its own secretariat within the FAO's structures. As an international treaty, the IPPC aims to prevent the spread and introduction of pests in plants and plant products and to promote appropriate measures for their control. The IPPC has always played an important role in international trade as the control measures which it governs need to ensure that pests are not exported, and at the same time that these measures are technically justified. The IPPC is governed by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) which adopts international standards for phytosanitary measures. The CPM has a type of management committee called 'the Bureau' made up of 7 representatives, including 1 African representative. The Bureau also deals with technical assistance matters. The presence of 1 African delegate highlights the necessity for coordination and information exchange between African countries. On a functional level the CPM has a Standards Committee which manages the standard setting process and assists in the development of the standards. This also fulfils the role required of it by the WTO's SPS Agreement.

The activities of the CPM are guided by a seven point plan under which all activities will fall. These areas are:

1. A robust international standard setting and implementation programme,
2. Information exchange systems appropriate to meet IPPC obligations,

3. Effective dispute settlement systems,
4. Improved phytosanitary capacity of members,
5. Sustainable implementation of the IPPC,
6. International promotion of the IPPC and cooperation with relevant regional and international organizations.
7. The review of the status of plant protection across the globe.

It is notable that the current format of the CPM came into being in 2005, and its first chair was an African, Dr. Chagema Kedera from Kenya, who was now its vice chair. SACAU took full advantage of this state of good fortune and enlisted the assistance of Dr. Chagema Kedera to prepare SADC delegates for their attendance in advance of CPM meetings.

Interestingly the membership to the Commission has grown over the recent years with participation and collaboration being seen across the globe. African presence has had some influence in encouraging African states to ratify the IPPC, and Swaziland and Mozambique serve as good examples of recent accession countries from the SADC region. Later due in part to the activities of the project Botswana acceded and Lesotho commenced the accession process.

The increase in IPPC interest is in part reflected in the active participation and sponsorship of programs by China in sponsoring an Asian project for IPPC compliance in that region and lending associate staff directly to the IPPC. This provides useful supporting evidence that the SACAU initiative was well founded and in good company as it where.

In addition, the IPPC itself recognized that the participation of least developed countries in the standard setting program, hence the possible effective implementation of such international standards at country level, was sadly lacking. It was recognized that if this trend continued, the core vision of controlling the spread of pests would not be achieved. A trust fund was created under the IPPC to which co-operating partners would contribute with a specific aim of assisting poorer contracting parties to attend the meetings. The fund is fully administered by the IPPC for the benefit of these countries and directly disbursed by the secretariat through the FAO's channels. This facility was designed to build capacity. SACAU effectively dovetailed its own funding activities with the trust fund. This had the advantage of covering more bases – a wider possible attendance by more countries. Good governance was also practiced, and SACAU declined to fund certain attendees when they had already obtained IPPC funding, thus avoiding double funding of the same delegates.

The practically orientated 'Standards Committee' consists of 26 members who must be experts in scientific biology, including two members from North America and four members from each other FAO region (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East) save for the Southwest Pacific region who has three members. The Standard Committee meets at least once a year, usually in November.

An expert group of seven members, the Standards Committee Working Group, called the SC-7, is selected by the Standards Committee from its membership, also representing each FAO region. The functions of the SC-7 are determined by the Standards Committee and include the review and revision of specifications, working group drafts and drafts from consultation processes. Temporary or permanent working groups and drafting groups may be established by the Standards Committee as required to assist the SC-7.

More importantly for our purposes the SC-7 is composed of elected experts who are tasked with drafting the standards. Upon completion of these standard drafts, the SC-7 sends the draft standards to member countries for their comments. SADC countries will not therefore necessarily be present at these meetings, but it is possible that the African representative might be from a SADC country. The countries (and therefore all SADC countries) are then invited to submit comments which are discussed at subsequent meetings of the SC-7.

The CPM had been concerned that the rate at which standards were being developed was rather slow, and identified 8 reasons for this. In perusing this list it is clear that the SACAU interventions were on the right track and with continued diligence would likely make a meaningful contribution to alleviating several of these constraints. These are that:

1. Country comments not getting to the committee with enough time for proper review;
2. Too much time is spent drafting and not on other functions as identified in the terms of reference of the committee;
3. Obtaining regular attendance of all members of the committee;
4. Limited time available for the committee to consider the comments prior to the meetings;
5. Lack of Secretariat resources to provide editorial assistance in drafting;
6. Are the members expected to be regional representatives or experts, or both?
7. Problems with obtaining sufficient expertise;
8. Difficulties in getting full participation in the meetings due to language issues and a lack of familiarity with the process.

The pre-inception project baseline determination looked at the meetings of the SC-7 as well as the meetings of the Standards Committee in order to see which countries have participated and which countries have contributed. A survey of the reports of these meetings and of the meetings of the SC-7 was conducted in order to glean SADC countries participation. It remained unclear whether the SADC countries submitted actual comments on draft standards, independent of attendance. A further examination was thus conducted. In the baseline analysis for the project it then came to light that between 2002 and 2005 only South Africa had participated in the Standards Committee. Also between 2002 and 2005 not more than 4 SADC countries were minuted as having submitted any comments on draft standards. The baseline showed that the presence and, even more so the technical participation of SADC, was encouraging but indicative that there was definite room for improvement. It was notable that countries had made use of the opportunity to make their comments from a distance even when not in attendance at the meetings. This indicated that there were potentially regional participants that could be making on-site contributions at the IPPC.

The Convention provides for the Regional Plant Protection Organizations within the IPPC framework. There is an African chapter - the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council. This structure however does not function as it should. This is indeed a pity as Africa has the highest number of contracting parties in the CPM and has the potential to actively participate in driving the organization. SACAU commissioned work has suggested that a more practical, workable methodology in the governance of a continental strategy has to be devised. This would meet the needs of the continent in information exchange, mobilizing resources, standard setting and formulation, advocacy and awareness creation. It was also suggested that in order to improve the operation of the African chapter, Regional Economic Communities are employed as the contact points for a more effective running of the organization. In this regard the cooperation between SADC and the SACAU programme

was fast becoming a model that was being mooted within the 'corridors' as a beacon of hope that this can be achieved. Others went as far as suggesting that the SADC/SACAU group simply make sub-regional inputs in the absence of a coherent continental strategy. The observation here is that even a modest capacity enhancement intervention through the regional standards programme seemed to have had rapid continent wide effects, as is evidenced here.

The IPPC treaty has a dispute settlement mechanism, but this has never been used. This is potentially an avenue for African countries to explore for the future. However at this stage effective participation in IPPC activities is a prerequisite which first has to be addressed before more nuanced procedures such as tackling a dispute can be addressed. This does however point to the fact that the international standards system is biased against poorer countries. It can also be speculated that disputes will not emerge within the IPPC as the cross referencing to the IPPC in the WTO SPS Agreement makes the WTO the forum of choice within which to address standards disputes of all types, due to its proven track record and the access to binding sanctions – both of which are absent in the IPPC. SACAU has however adopted a policy stance within the context of aid for trade to the effect that it supports the concept of enforcement of existing rights under international forums, if necessary through the dispute settlement mechanism of the WTO, to which these bodies are linked. The avenue for future activity in standards dispute settlement is this a clear area within which to pursue future activity.

5. What SACAU did under the project

One of the key areas of focus was for SACAU to provide expert support to assist delegates in preparing for international meetings. The original aim of having an expert provide a briefing document in advance of meetings was extended in a creative fashion by combining the resources of SACAU, ComMark, the SADC Secretariat and the FAO's regional office. Delegates earmarked to attend the CPM3 (2008), CPM4 (2009) and CPM5 (2010) were brought together in regional meetings in advance of the trips to Rome and brief them together.

So - ahead of CPM3 in 2008, SADC, SACAU, ComMark and the University of Pretoria jointly convened a preparation workshop for the SADC region. The workshop took place in February 2008 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The meeting served to allow delegates to share information related to CPM3, develop consensus on key issues and agree on a strategy to be adopted for the Member States during the CPM3 meeting. Expert advice was provided by the University of Pretoria who, inter alia had a scientist on staff who previously served on the IPPC secretariat. The synergies in funding activities became evident: SADC secured and paid for the workshop venue and invited member states, while SACAU made arrangements and paid for flight tickets, per diems and accommodation. The event was well attended by ten SADC member states, representatives of SADC, the IPPC Inter-African Phytosanitary Commission, ComMark, and SACAU. Admittedly the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe were absent.

As well as capacitating delegates the meeting proactively set goals that they wanted to achieve in Rome. These included the likes of:

- Seeing that expert working groups were representative of developed and also developing countries to ensure that their recommendations are not only technically sound but also possible to implement.

- Having the IPPC's information exchange systems address the needs and capacities of all stakeholders, and Africans in particular.
- Making the CPM technical assistance strategy for phytosanitary capacity building have effective participation to ensure consideration of national capacity needs.
- Urging non-contracting SADC member states to ratify the IPPC.

Subsequently 8 delegates from Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia attended the CPM3 in April 2008 in Rome, Italy. Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe were unable to attend.

An interesting additional service that SACAU provided was resources so that delegates could attend preparatory meetings in Rome two days before the CPM meeting. The first meeting was for SADC member states, but other African countries also participated and these were given the benefit on being briefed on the SADC preparatory meeting. The discussions sought to harmonize the African positions in order to have a common position put forward. The meeting also discussed the nomination of candidates for vacant positions in the subsidiary bodies of the IPPC. A second meeting was held under the auspices of the African Union to develop consensus on items of concern for Africa. Both technical (plant protection people) and administrative officers (missions based in Rome) were requested to attend. However few diplomatic officials participated. The deliberations focused on the filling of vacant positions, infrastructure and capacity building, including attendance or participation in the international standards setting forums. The meeting was however not able to come up with a concrete African position since most of the documents were provided only about a week before the meeting. Despite this, the meetings provided better understanding of the CPM environment.

Post meeting the sponsored delegates reported, inter alia, that:

- The meetings provided good networking opportunities. For example, the delegates from Malawi discussed with the Chinese representatives possibilities for a trip by China to Malawi to do inspection in tobacco fields before China starts buying tobacco from Malawi.
- Strong linkage initiatives between SADC and the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council were applauded.
- They had been sensitized and developed a concern that private standards adversely affected export markets, and that this would need to be a CPM discussion in future.
- Delegates made mention that they were under time pressure due to the additional evening caucus meetings.

Based upon the positive experiences on CPM3, it was decided to adopt a similar approach for CPM4 in 2009 and for CPM5 in 2010. Two preparatory sessions for CPM3 were held.

The first intervention thus commenced with a preparatory meeting in the region in October 2008. The meeting was held in Gaborone in combination with a SADC Plant Protection Committee meeting. SACAU also commissioned a regional expert from Zambia to compile a study to define what IPPC standards were impeding trade for SADC countries. The findings of the report were shared with and explained to the delegates. Funding for the activity was provided by the SADC Secretariat.

Most of the insights that came up where related to the need to strengthen in-country capacity. It was observed for instance that:

- International Standards were not a problem in themselves, but the capacity to implement them was, often due to the low understanding of the standards.
- Strengthening local enquiry points was critical in order to enhance participation of the region in IPPC activities. This is linked to a need for in-country and inter-country consultations.
- SPS enquiry points in countries should all work together and this could be done through the formation of national coordinating committees. All SPS issues can be discussed there and positions for taking up to regional and international forums may be formulated in these.

In March 2009 a second preparatory meeting was held in Gaborone, Botswana. The objectives of the meeting were to share information related to CPM4, develop consensus on key issues and agree on a strategy to be adopted in CPM 4 meetings.

The meeting was attended by 17 representatives from 13 SADC states. Other participants included representatives from SACA, SADC Secretariat and FAO Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa. Dr. John Kedera, then from Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services, and who was also the Vice Chairperson of the CPM, facilitated the meeting and provided technical advice on the CPM4 agenda items. Delegates from South Africa and Zambia, who have been attending IPPC meetings continually for several years, were also useful resource persons in sharing their experiences.

The first two days were devoted to preparations for CPM4 while the last day discussed a proposed fruit fly project. Presentations and discussions of the first two days included a review of participation in CPM3; IPPC/ CPM procedures; CPM4 agenda items; identification of common positions on agenda items; formulation of positions on common areas on CPM4 agenda and development of a common strategy to be adopted during CPM4. Positions on common areas of the CPM4 agenda were formulated but due to time constraints, it was agreed to develop a common strategy in Rome a day before the CPM4 meeting.

Countries were urged to participate in the IPPC's 'Capacity Evaluation' questionnaire and send the outcomes to the IPPC Secretariat. This exercise would enable the identification of capacity gaps and influence decisions of the strategic planning and technical assistance by the IPPC.

Some of the concerns that were raised in relation to the looming CPM4 meeting were that some delegates who had participated in the previous CPM preparatory workshop were not the ones who eventually attended CPM meeting; IPPC procedures were not well known by countries and there was a need to address this in preparatory meetings; governments were failing to have national stakeholder discussions to effectively mandate their positions; poor internet connections hampered getting documents in time; links between Rome missions and in-country offices were poor; and the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council did not effectively service the SADC region.

SACA then supported the participation of six delegates from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique and Namibia at the April CPM4 meeting in Rome. Other SADC countries represented that were not funded by the project were Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia. Half of these delegates were first time participants at a CPM session. Funding requests were also received from Tanzania and Zambia but were not granted as these countries had already secured funds from the IPPC Trust Fund. Other member states did not respond to the offer for support, which was disappointing. It is worth

noting that the delegates supported by SACAU from Angola and Mauritius were the same as those who participated in the CPM3 meeting. This repeat attendance by the same officials was encouraging and would hopefully be replicated by more countries for CPM5 in 2010.

The intended preparatory meeting was held in Rome in order to develop and agree on a strategy to be adopted at the meeting. The meeting also suggested names for nominations for a rapporteur and a representative to the Credentials Committee. Preparatory meetings were therefore considered valuable as they empowered countries to contribute to the discussions, and needed to be held again for future CPM sessions.

It was encouraging that some of the positions adopted by SADC member states at the preparatory meetings were taken up, tabled and raised at CPM4 session. For instance –

- The nominations of delegates from SADC member states to the Credentials (Mauritius) and Standards Committee (South Africa and Zambia).
- An intervention expressing concern that 'irradiation treatments' may not be able to be applied in developing countries due to lack of appropriate facilities.
- The SADC Secretariat was able to speak and reported on the support provided to member states to participate in the regional workshop on draft standards and CPM4 through travel assistance and preparatory workshops. SADC also issued a word of encouragement those members that are not contracting parties to the IPPC to ratify the Convention.

During the time, it subsequently transpired that Botswana was in the process of ratifying the IPPC and Lesotho would be conducting its regulatory review as part of its IPPC accession process. It also transpired that SADC had already allocated funding for regional workshops for 2009. This was in large part due to the assessment of the SADC delegate that SADC member states had made effective contributions to debates on standards at the meeting. In particular they noted that there was significant improvement in delegates' understanding of plant protection matters and the role of phytosanitary standards in international trade at CPM4 relative to what had been observed at CPM3. In addition the IPPC publicly acknowledged SACAU's contributions to the IPPC Trust Fund in 2008.

A third preparatory meeting was held in February 2010, also in Gaborone, Botswana. Similar to the other two meetings, its purpose of the meeting was to share information related to CPM 5, develop consensus on key issues and agree on a strategy to be adopted for member states during CPM 5.

Thirteen representatives from 10 SADC Member States, i.e. Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe; one from FAO Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa and SACAU, as well as three from SADC Secretariat attended the meeting. Dr. John Kedera was again engaged to produce a technical brief and to facilitate the meeting.

Some of the issues/matters coming from this meeting were:

- The importance of participating in side meetings and evening sessions at CPM sessions. It was observed that the representation of SADC countries at these meetings during CPM 4 was rather low and needed to be improved so as to defend countries' positions, get points across and monitor discussions
- The importance of NPPOs partnering with industry since industry can assist in lobbying government for better services and improved resource allocation

- There is need to continue/build on efforts made by SADC and SACAU to ensure countries have a continuous involvement on IPPC matters and processes
- There is need for regional consultations on plant protection issues beyond IPPC meeting attendance
- Lack of continuity remains a challenge and the need for institutionalizing matters was considered one of the approaches that could be followed to deal with the problem. Further, countries were encouraged to share proceedings of this meeting with relevant colleagues to ensure institutional memory
- Communication takes long to reach technical officials and this has implications on participation
- Amongst others, the meeting agreed that SADC and Zambia would work on getting the Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives of Zambia to open CPM5

Positions on areas of common concern and a strategy to be adopted during CPM5 were developed in a number of areas. The strategy consisted of the statements/positions to be presented at CPM5, the country to present and where in the agenda to make the intervention. The strategy was further discussed in Rome a day before the start of CPM 5, during which countries were allocated specific positions to raise during the meeting.

Subsequently, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia attended CPM5. The arrangements for participation in the meeting were closely coordinated with SADC. Whilst SACAU funded two delegates from Mozambique and Swaziland, SADC funded representatives from Botswana and Lesotho. The others participated with support from other sources. The RSC, together with two representatives from SADC, also attended this meeting as observers from SADC.

Feedback reports from the SACAU-sponsored delegates indicated the importance of preparatory meetings in order to equip delegates with the necessary technical knowledge and information, and for coordinated responses. Other observations were that the regional preparatory meetings were making an impact in CPM sessions as was evident from the active participation of SADC countries at CPM5, and the importance of being organized and well-coordinated before and during CPM sessions as this improves participation.

Finally, the official report of CPM5 captures interventions reflecting some made by SADC countries based on the main outcomes of the regional preparatory meeting. These include the election of a representative from South Africa to be a rapporteur; the need for a sub-regional plant protection organization (RPPO) for better coordination in order to support implementation of the IPPC; the need for capacity building for implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures and welcoming the new International Phytosanitary Portal (IPP). SADC members also thanked SADC and SACAU for funding and organizing the preparatory meeting for CPM5 for Southern Africa, noting that it had increased their involvement in IPPC and CPM, and a better understanding of the topics discussed at CPM 5. Representatives from the SADC region were also elected to CPM subsidiary bodies.

6. Lessons learnt

It is evident that Southern Africa has come from a very low although not insignificant participation base in the activities of the IPPC. This stems firstly from the fact that the international architecture in standards setting is complex in legal and functional structure

and favours countries with the financial resources to engage in these complex structures; and secondly from a lack of capacity linked to poor in-country structures with little appreciation for the science which is critical to understand international standards. The SACAU project can be deemed as an example of best practice in the region and the continent. The effects and benefits are well recognized. This being said one has to recognize that the project was only functional for 3 years and in the grander scheme of international standard setting has had a modest impact. It was evident from FAO officials and country delegates themselves that the SADC countries hardly contributed at all in CPM1 and CPM2 before the project was initiated. This was also evident in the study baseline. Thereafter the marked performance of the SADC participants particularly in CPM4 was acknowledged publicly in the CPM plenary meeting by the IPPC secretariat. This is indicative of a serious imperative to nurture what has been achieved thus far as all indications are that the continuation of the activities holds substantial promise for the future. This goes to show that participation in international standards setting processes is a long term commitment. Institutional understanding, structures and memory have emerged as key criteria for success – none of these can be achieved with ‘quick fix’ solutions. Since the countries have similar constraints with regards to the IPPC issues, a coordinated and collective voice is the suggested ongoing approach.

Some of the more detailed observations are as follows:

There is an institutional context to the IPPC and other standard setting bodies that cannot be readily understood without actual experience as a delegate. For example SADC countries were confused by the ‘forgone conclusion’ of CPM plenary meetings. It has become evident that delegates need to volunteer for ‘friends of the chair’ duties where much of the actual work is performed in unofficial sessions on the fringes of the meetings. There are official procedures and then functional methods to do things, and these need to be understood. There is also a realization that deeper integration into the sub-structure is useful in ‘anchoring’ participation. To this end the nomination of South Africa and Zambia to the standards committee and Mauritius and Swaziland to the Credentials Committee are good signs of progress. It is also noted that often standards generation work has to be undertaken outside of normal salaried duties, it is hard work and unpaid.

Learning about the IPPC can also be facilitated by professional secondments and internships for young practitioners in the field. These have been done on an ad-hoc basis which could perhaps be formalised.

A concern exists as regards the lack of continuity in attendance of both preparatory meetings and actual CPM sessions. There have been instances where people who attend the preparatory meetings are different to those who attend the actual CPM meetings. Delegates who attended CPM3 (8 delegates) and CPM4 (6 delegates) were different individuals, except for 2 delegates. The same can be said for CPM5. Procedures are needed so that there is an effective trail of history within ministries so that even if there is a lack of delegate continuity, new delegates have access to previous records, minutes, trip reports and so forth. SACAU was able to fulfil this role in many cases by acting as a repository. In addition SADC actively sought to ‘match make’ by checking whether a delegate assigned to an IPPC meeting was the same one as that who attended a preparatory meeting. If not they would brief and supply the new person with prior documents and knowledge.

Efforts by SADC and SACAU to convene CPM preparatory meetings were commended by many country delegates and it was acknowledged that these meetings are instrumental in improving participation of countries at CPM sessions.

To improve any delegate's participation first of all resources must be available for both the regional preparatory meetings as well as for the CPM meetings. These resources must be made available in a timely fashion. The preparatory meetings are essential and it should be conducted at least a month before the CPM meeting, to allow the participants to do all the required consultations and make national arrangements to attend the actual CPM meetings.

Several countries came to the realization that in-country structures are a critical element in ensuring an effective basis for cooperating and representing the national interest at a SADC and IPPC level. The main challenges for the national plant protection organization are raising awareness on the standards and IPPC activities to their national stakeholders at all levels, ensuring that compliance with the standards. Thus they see that specific activities have to be developed at the national level, which will then enable the producers to produce in to international standards' quality ensuring that national agricultural products have access to the international markets.

There are definite benefits in working the IPPC support through the private sector (SACAU) as opposed to making a direct grant to the respective governments. The following are the key reasons:

- Short decision-making processes means less red tape and implementation is quicker.
- It allows for better coordination and assists in establishing linkages between and among countries as there are fewer political dynamics.
- It is easier to be 'prescriptive' and insist on compliance with funding procedures than it would be for a governmental organization.
- It is advantageous to work directly with the private sector because it is now given the opportunity to implement programmes through public-private partnerships which many governments and donors prefer.

Collaboration on funding between the IPPC Trust Fund and SACAU were in some cases established. For CPM3 there was no coordination with the IPPC in terms of funding and additional delegates from countries that already had funding were sponsored to attend the meeting. SADC did not fund participation at CPM3 but did fund conferencing facilities for the preparatory meeting. For CPM4 SACAU requested the IPPC to inform them of delegates they were funding and SACAU only supported people from countries that had no source of funding based on this information. SADC had also committed to fund some participants but could not due to long processes they would have had to encounter as we were under time pressure. There was overall and ongoing communication at all the times about the arrangements between the IPPC, SACAU and SADC. Relatedly for CPM 5, there was coordination and communication as to who was funding who.

