

FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVES AT IGAD: A PRESENTATION AT THE CONTINENTAL WORKSHOP ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY FOR AFRICA.

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF IGAD.

The InterGovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), was created in 1996 to take the place of IGADD (Inter Governmental Authority on Drought and Development), which was put in place due to the severe droughts in the region. It was formed to help find solutions to problems such as lack of food due to droughts.

IGAD was borne out of the need to take on other issues within the region.

MISSION AND VISION.

The Mission of the IGAD was to help with supplying food, protecting the Environment and to help keep Peace and Security.

STRATEGY.

The strategy of IGAD is to set up a structure to help achieve Peace, Prosperity and Regional Integration. It uses experiences from the past, current structure of development cooperation, along with challenges and issues that come up that the region faces.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE OF IGAD.

The IGAD is made up of 4 Policy parts. Namely:

1. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government; this group makes Policies that are to be followed.
2. The Council of Ministers; this group helps come up with Policies, approves work programmes and annual budgets.
3. The Committee of Ambassadors; this group comes together when needed to advise the Executive Secretary.
4. The Secretariat; this group helps brainstorm to come up with and implement programs and projects that have been approved.

The groups work to create well working Policies in Social, Technological and Scientific fields. The group forms policies for Trade, Transport, along with many other projects and Programs.

They work towards forming free trade and for people to move freely throughout the region. They also Initiate and promote Food Security and Environmental protection to work against drought.

1.1 SPS ISSUES.

Plant health, Animal health, and Food safety are issues of SPS that must be addressed, driven by the need for protection of the consumers.

Addressing these issues has been hampered by the lack of adequate political will to develop effective National Food Safety Control Systems, including reviewing and updating National Food Safety Policies and Legislations, Setting Food Safety Standards and strengthening Institutional Frameworks for their implementation.

Consumption of unsafe food has negative impacts on all levels of Socio-Economic development including Human health (which is threatened), National and local Economies (are disrupted), Tourism and Nutritional status of communities affected, all these exacerbating poverty.

Mobilization of MS towards enforcement of SPS measures and procedures at all stages of the food value chain will enhance Regional Trade and promote access to International markets. Also, encouraging MS and contemporary RECs to get involved and participate more effectively in SPS Standards setting Organizations (PAN-SPSO project will strengthen their own capacities and position on the issue.

IGAD will develop mechanisms for facilitating achievement of Compliance to International standards and Regulations by MS, while targeting accessibility to the Regional and International markets for Agro-products.

1.1.1. SPS- PROTOCOL – FOOD SAFETY POLICY.

The Region and most of her MS have no defined and published Policies on Food Safety as part of their wider National Food and Nutrition Policies, although there exist Food laws designed to protect consumers. Mostly, Food control agencies in these countries operate under various Ministries and Departments. This arrangement is part of the structural issues that make it difficult for achieving effective coordination and implementation of the Food Safety policy due to competing interests.

1.1.2. FOOD SAFETY STRUCTURE AT IGAD.

IGAD prompted by the 2010/2011 drought crisis, developed a strategy to end Drought Emergencies, leading to the birth of Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) that provides the framework for dealing with the drought Emergencies and related issues. Food Security, Trade and Food Safety constitute major components within the pillars of this initiative.

2. COORDINATION AND NETWORKING ON IGAD FOOD SAFETY CONCERNS INCLUDING ZOOSES, DETECTION OF FOOD HAZARDS IN FOOD TRADE IN AFRICA.

2.1. BETWEEN IGAD WITH MS, IGAD WITH OTHER RECs IN AND OUTSIDE AFRICA, IGAD WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES.

IGAD largely works in collaboration with MS structures, WHO, EU, FAO, EAC, AU-IBAR on issues of mutual interest including Food Safety.

2.2. WITHIN IGAD MS.

MS within IGAD have working Agreements regarding SPS and individual Country legal frameworks for Food Safety regulation, without comprehensive, harmonized policies. IGAD intends to facilitate harmonization of such by providing a regional framework template for guiding the process.

2.3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK, INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT IGAD AND MS FOR COORDINATING FOOD SAFETY FUNCTIONS

This is an area that requires more focus since MS and RECs operate at varied levels. Coordination must be prioritized alongside specific allocation of Resources in order to develop Legal Frameworks and Infrastructure for sustaining the processes.

3. CONCLUSIONS ON THE CURRENT FOOD SAFETY STATUS IN THE RECs

It is imperative that the MS actively participate in the formulation and setting of the Standards developed by CODEX Alimentaries commission, World Organization for Animal Health and International Plant Protection Convention for human, animal and plant health which are of international standing.

Also, effective participation by these MS would provide them with opportunity to understand any new standards and offer ideas on how to effectively and efficiently implement and assess the impact on National production, Consumption and Trade of the Agricultural commodities concerned, and what actions to take to comply or demonstrate compliance with the SPS Measures.

4. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE FURTHER IN ENSURING FOOD SAFETY IN THE IGAD REGION IN FORM OF WAY FORWARD?

- 4.1.** Harmonization of policies among the Member States for joint actions on Food Safety.
- 4.2.** Members States to set aside adequate resources for development, and/or Implementation of the Food Safety policies.
- 4.3.** **Ensure seriousness and effective participation by Technical and Policy Officials in all MS, to Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Agreements to enhance Compliance to the SPS.**