Communique on the Joint East Africa Community/Eastern Africa Grain Council Regional Meeting to Harmonise Standards for Cereals and Pulses

9th to 12th October 2018, Zanzibar, Tanzania

The East African Community (EAC) in partnership with the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) hosted the Regional Meeting to Harmonise Standards for Cereals and Pulses from 9th to 12th October 2018 at the Zanzibar Beach resort in Zanzibar, Tanzania. The Regional Meeting was hosted with the support of the USAID East Africa Trade and Investment Hub (EATIH), and was convened under the auspices of the EAC Technical Committee number EASC/TC/014 responsible for standards for cereals and pulses. The meeting convened approximately 30 experts in food quality and safety standards drawn from the public and private sectors from the EAC Partner States. Annex 1 avails the full list of participants.

The purpose of the Meeting was to receive and consider the National Positions on the review of the Standards for Soy flour, Composite flour, Maize Flour and Wheat Flour as developed by Partner States during their respective national consultations, and eventually achieve a consensus on the revised harmonised Draft EAC Standards for these commodities.

BACKGROUND

Standards for staple food play an important role in regulating food quality and food safety. Considering that intra-regional trade between East African Community (EAC) Partner States is significant, a synchronised form of regulating food quality and safety is essential to ensure that quality and safety considerations do not disrupt trade.
Harmonised East African Standards for 22 staple foods and derived products were first gazetted in December 2013, with 9 of them revised for further improvement and gazetted once again December 2017. An additional five (5) harmonised grain standards have been earmarked for review in 2018/19, these being standards for Finger Millet, Sorghum, Green Grams, Soy Flour and Composite Flour. A regional meeting was convened from 17th to 21st September 2018 in Entebbe, Uganda to review standards for Finger Millet, Sorghum and Green Grams. This Regional Meeting in Zanzibar was convened to review standards for Soy Flour and Composite Flour, as well as consider proposed amendments to Maize Flour and Wheat Flour Standards that were brought forward by the EAC Technical Committee for Nutrition and Special Dietary Needs (EASC/TC/018).

A. Remarks by Key Dignitaries

The Regional Meeting was officially opened by remarks from the Host Country. Speaking on behalf of the Director General for Tanzania Bureau of Standards, Mr. Ali Hamad Ali, the Head of Testing and Calibration at the Zanzibar Bureau of Standards:

**APPRECIATED** the Partner States for turning up in big numbers which demonstrated their commitment and priority they have attached to harmonisations of standards for cereals and pulses.

**INFORMED** that the meeting will discuss East Africa Standards for Composite flour, edible full fat soy flour, wheat flour and maize milled products.

**URGED** the members to technically deliberate decisions which will be used to improve the draft standards before progressing to the next stages of standardization.

In his welcome remarks, Kimwaga Mhando, Trade and Advocacy Manager at the EAGC:

**APPRECIATED** the delegates on their commitment towards harmonisation of standards in the cereals and pulses sector as part of EAC’s regional integration efforts.

**EMPHASIZED** on how EAGC has been working EAC Partner States in development and implementation of harmonised Standards to facilitate trade.

**ACKNOWLEDGED** the support of the EAC secretariat and USAID/EATIH throughout the Standards review process.
On behalf of the Director General - Customs & Trade, the Principal Standards Officer at the EAC Secretariat, Ms. Stella Apolot:

APRECIATED the delegates and their commitment to the standardization work and honouring the invite in huge numbers.

URGED the partner states to update the TC secretariat and EAC on the adoption and implementation of these standards so as to facilitate trade and achieve food security in the region.

APPRECIATED the United Republic of Tanzania for hosting the meeting, USAID EATIH and EAGC for their support in enhancing EAC integration agenda whilst improving Private, Public Partnership.

Mr. Yohannes Assefa, Director Agriculture and Agribusiness at the USAID East Africa Trade and Investment Hub:

WELCOMED the delegates to the meeting

EMPHASIZED that efficient agricultural markets enable cross border trade in staple foods and contribute to economic growth and food security.

NOTED that EATIH hub is partnering with the EAC partner states is to harmonise regional policies to create an enabling environment for intra-regional trade in agricultural products.

URGED all partner states to continue to adopt and implement and revised standards so as to support regional trade.

B. Key Observations and Agreements from the Meeting

Deliberations on the National Positions for revision of Wheat Flour, Maize Flour, Composite Flour and Soy Flour

The meeting deliberated the National Positions of EAC Partner States with respect to four (4) Draft East African Standards, these being: Wheat Flour (DEAS 1:2018); Milled Maize (Corn) Products (DEAS 44:2018),Composite Flour (DEAS 782:2018) and Edible Full Fat Soy Flour (DEAS 799: 2018).
The meeting NOTED and AGREED to the following general changes to the draft Standards:

i. **DELETION** of the ISO sampling and test methods for cereal and pulses standards under the normative reference clause and replaced with the EAS 900:2017, Cereal and pulses-test methods respectively for the parameters that apply.

ii. **INTRODUCTION** of the relevant test methods ISO 4833-1, 16649-2, ISO 6579-1, ISO 21527-2, CODEXTAN 192 to replace the deleted, the relevant ISO 4832, ISO 16649-1, ISO 6579, ISO 7954, EAS 103 respectively in clause 2 of the normative reference.

iii. **DELETION** of the indicated ‘absent’ requirement for E.coli and replaced with a limit “<1x10^2” as being a raw material it is impractical to obtain the absent as a limit due to post harvest handling and flour is still due for further processing.

iv. **DELETION** of the ISO 4832, ISO 16649-1, ISO 21527-2 respectively and the unit of expression specifically for the total aerobic count, E.coli and S. aureus were corrected in accordance with the relevant test method.

v. **REPLACEMENT** of the referenced standard on sampling to be EAS 900.

The full range of changes made to the three draft East African Standards will be available to stakeholders during the 60-day Public Review period expected to commence in mid-October 2018.
Updates on the Status of Adoption and Implementation of East African Standards for Cereals and Pulses

The Regional Meeting:

i. **NOTED** that Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania have already adopted and are implementing the East African Standards for cereals and pulses that were gazetted by the EAC in December 2017.

ii. **FURTHER NOTED** that Burundi and Uganda are yet to adopt the Standards, but aim to have the Standards adopted by December 2018.

Delegates during the meeting

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD**

The meeting had several recommendations. The meeting recommended:

1. Partner States should **FAST-TRACK** the domestication of the 2017 East African Standards under cereals and pulses.

2. Eastern Africa Grain Council to consider **SUPPORTING THE REVIEW** of the remaining set of the standards including sensitization on awareness of the harmonized standards.

3. The Partner States to **UNDERTAKE VALIDATION PROCESS** of the EAS 900:2017 (Cereals and Pulses – Sampling) and EAS 901:2017 (Cereal and Pulses – Test Methods).

4. Changes to be made on the EAS 1 (Wheat Flour – Specification) and EAS 44 (Milled Maize (Corn) Products – Specification) should be incorporated in the EAS 767 (Fortified Wheat Flour – Specification) and EAS 768 (Fortified Milled Maize - Specification) respectively.
The meeting agreed on the following NEXT STEPS:

a) **CIRCULATION FOR PUBLIC REVIEW** of the 7 Draft East African Standards reviewed during the Entebbe Regional Meeting (September 2018) and this Regional Meeting as per procedure by 15th October 2018.

b) **CIRCULATION OF THE REMAINING SET OF STANDARDS** for review for the purposes of prioritization in 2018/2019 work.

For more information, please contact the EAGC Secretariat through the addresses below:

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Annex 1: List of Participants

United Republic of Tanzania
1. Prof. Henry S. Laswai (Sokoine University of Agriculture, TC Chairperson)
2. Stephanie Silas Kaaya (Tanzania Bureau of Standards, TC Secretary)
3. Salama Ghuio Shekilango (Tanzania Bureau of Standards)
5. Ali Hamad Ali (Zanzibar Bureau of Standards)
6. Analice Anatol Kamala (Tanzania Food and Drug Authority)
7. Iddi Hatibu Mvungi (S.S. Bakhresa & Co. Ltd)

Republic of Burundi
1. Dieudonne Manirakiza (Burundi Bureau of Standards)
2. Simeon Misigaro (Burundi Bureau of Standards)
3. Jackson Quincy Nahayo (CFCB – AGRO BUSINESS)
4.Nsenga Ruyaga Gilbert (Ministry to the Office of the President, Responsible for EAC Affairs)

Republic of Kenya
1. Peter Mutua (Kenya Bureau of Standards)
2. Agness Mdzomba (Kenya Bureau of Standards)
3. Ms. Jeniffer Cheroigin Chepkoech (Proctor and Allan (EA) Ltd)
4. Mr. Kennedy Kisie (Pembe Flour Mills)
5. Ms. Zipporah Nthitu (Kenya Bureau of Standards)
6. Mr. Isaac Mungenya (Kenya Bureau of Standards)

Republic of Rwanda
1. Moses Ndayisenga (Minimex Ltd)
2. Ngezahayo Diogene (Sosoma Industries)
3. Peter Mugisha (Africa Improved Foods Ltd)
4. Ms. Rosine Niyonshuti (Rwanda Standards Board)

Republic of Uganda
1. Mr. Joel Peter Oryang (Uganda National Bureau of Standards – SMC Secretary)
2. Arthur Tabula (Uganda National Bureau of Standards)
3. Pamela Akwap (Uganda National Bureau of Standards)
4. Rose Nakimuli (Chemiphar (U) Ltd)
5. Dr. Moses Matovu (National Agricultural Research Organisation)

Regional Organisations and Development Partners
1. Mr. Yohannes Assefa (USAID East Africa Trade and Investment Hub)
2. Mr. Marwa Moses (USAID East Africa Trade and Investment Hub)

East African Community Secretariat
1. Stella Apolot
2. Mr. Yusuf Ibrahim

Eastern Africa Grain Council Secretariat
1. Kim Mhando