



VIRTUAL WTO AGRICULTURE SYMPOSIUM 2020 - AGRICULTURAL TRADE AND FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

Speakers highlighted the flexibilities afforded to WTO Members in the WTO SPS Agreement in developing and implementing SPS measures, based on science and risk assessment. The Agreement encourages food safety measures to be based on international standards set by Codex Alimentarius ("harmonization"). Codex faces three challenges: (i) a lack of sustainable funding for scientific advice; (ii) uncertainty related to the continuous evolution of science, and the need for transparency in this regard; and (iii) a need for Codex to be open to insights from other scientific communities.

The session highlighted the importance of meeting international standards and other food safety requirements to facilitate safe trade and protect public health, including domestically. In the longer-term, SPS compliance leads to sustainable economic growth, food security and improved livelihoods, contributing to the SDGs. The work of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) was viewed as important in this regard.

Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will be critical

