

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Report (1995) of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

The present report is being circulated by the Chairman of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures on his own responsibility. This report provides a resumé of the activities and decisions of the Committee during 1995.

The Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the "SPS Committee") held three regular meetings in 1995, on 29-30 March, 26-27 June and 15-16 November. On 6-7 November, the SPS Committee held a special meeting, jointly with the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade, with respect to the transparency provisions of both agreements. Ambassador K. Bergholm (Finland) was appointed Chairman for 1995.

The SPS Committee agreed on working procedures for the conduct of its work (G/SPS/1), and agreed to consider Rules of Procedure at its first meeting in 1996. It also adopted procedures for the notification of proposed sanitary and phytosanitary measures (G/SPS/2/Rev.1). Lists of national Enquiry Points and of national Notification Authorities were established. At its June meeting, the SPS Committee took a decision regarding information to be submitted by observer governments (G/SPS/3).

The SPS Committee considered information provided by Members regarding their national regulatory procedures and their use of risk assessment in the development of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. It also identified work being undertaken by relevant standard-setting organizations on risk-assessment methodologies. Preliminary work was carried out on the guidelines to ensure consistency in risk management decisions, which the SPS Committee is required to develop (Article 5:5 refers). The SPS Committee exchanged views regarding the establishment of a procedure to monitor the use of international standards, and existing standards were identified. The SPS Committee also addressed practices for the exchange of relevant sanitary and phytosanitary information between trading partners.

The SPS Committee agreed to invite, on an *ad hoc* basis, the following intergovernmental organizations as observers to its regular meetings: the Office International des Epizooties (OIE); the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex); the FAO International Plant Protection Convention Secretariat (IPPC); the FAO; the World Health Organization (WHO); and the International Trade Centre (ITC). In light of its technical expertise in matters related to the Agreement, the International Standards Organization (ISO) was also invited to participate, on an *ad hoc* basis, as an observer at meetings of the SPS Committee.

The following tentative schedule of meetings in 1996 was agreed by the SPS Committee: 20-21 March, 29-30 June and 8-9 October.