

INSPECTION AND QUARANTINE

Statement made by the Republic of Korea  
at the meeting of 8-9 October 1996

1. In response to the statement made by the US delegation concerning the Korean inspection and quarantine system, my delegation would like to make a few brief remarks with a view to sharing the relevant information with other Members of this Committee.

2. As the United States has stated, Korea and the United States engaged in bilateral consultations on 18 June 1996, to no avail.

3. However, as our delegation mentioned at the previous meeting, Korea has launched an ambitious programme since early last year aimed at streamlining and harmonizing its sanitary measures with the relevant international principles and standards. All of these actions and measures have been carried out in accordance with Korea's obligations under the WTO Agreements and other relevant international treaty commitments.

4. Concerning the particular issue of inspection and quarantine system, irrespective of the ongoing WTO dispute settlement procedure, Korea has already taken the necessary steps under its overall improvement plan with the firm intention to achieve an advance system. We anticipate that the improved measures in this field will enter into force by the end of this year, if the relevant administrative and legislative procedures are finalized as intended.

5. Let me cite a few examples of the measures which have been planned by the Korean Government.

(a) Random Sampling

The Korean Government will introduce a random sampling scheme by the end of this month, with a view to reducing the ratio of items subject to laboratory testing and enhancing the efficiency of inspection.

(b) Fumigation Treatment

Already in December 1995, Korea introduced the concept of quarantine pests of IPPC through the revision of the Plant Protection Act. Quarantine pests are limited to pests not found in Korea and those officially being controlled if they are found in Korea. These pests are to be determined through pest risk analysis. Accordingly, fumigation requirements for cosmopolitan pests will be abolished by the end of this year when the revised Plant Protection Act and its ministerial regulations take effect.

(c) Mandatory Sorting Requirement

By the end of this year, we plan to abolish the current mandatory sorting of spoiled agricultural products prior to customs clearance through a revision of the Ministerial Ordinance of the Food Sanitation Act, leaving the responsibility for this matter to the importers.

(d) Ingredient Reporting

The existing reporting requirement of all ingredient percentages will be amended. Under the newly envisaged system, reporting of the percentage will be required only for main ingredients, while only the names of other ingredients are necessary. Such a minimum level of reporting is deemed necessary to confirm and identify the categorization of products.

(e) Incubation Testing

The Korean Government is in the final stage of reviewing the technical data provided by the United States regarding the Medfly eradication programme in California. At present, we are positively considering the US report. I therefore believe that the Korean Government will officially notify the United States of its final decision on the incubation testing issue in the near future.

6. Finally, I assure the Committee that Korea will continue its effort to streamline its SPS system and we also look forward to reaching a mutually satisfactory resolution to this issue between Korea and the United States.