

**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR TRANSPARENCY WORKSHOP**

Note by the Secretariat<sup>1</sup>

1. The Secretariat of the World Trade Organization is organizing a special workshop on the transparency provisions of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), to be held in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop will begin on Monday, 18 October and will continue on Friday, 22 October 2010. The SPS Committee's informal and regular meetings will be held on 19-21 October 2010.
2. The objective of the workshop is to enhance the implementation and benefits of the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement, in particular by sharing experiences on how to operate an effective SPS National Notification Authority and Enquiry Point.
3. Representatives of Members, Observers and Observer Organizations are all invited to participate in the transparency workshop as well as in the meetings of the SPS Committee. Given the focus of this workshop, the Secretariat encourages in particular the participation of officials from Members' SPS Enquiry Points and Notification Authorities.
4. The WTO, with the financial assistance of the Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund (DDAGTF), will sponsor the participation of 50 government officials from developing and least-developed country Members and Observers. Interested officials are invited to consult document G/SPS/GEN/997 titled "WTO SPS Technical Activities in 2010: General Information, Selection Processes and Application Form." The deadline for applications is 9 July 2010.
5. During the selection process, the Secretariat will give priority to officials directly responsible for the work of either the SPS Enquiry Point or the Notification Authority. Exceptions will be made for candidates from Observer countries on the basis of evidence that the candidate has, or will have, responsibilities in this area in the context of the country's accession to the WTO.
6. The draft workshop programme contained in the Annex was prepared taking into account the past two transparency workshops held in October 2003 and October 2007,<sup>2</sup> as well as the Committee's discussions on this topic.

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<sup>1</sup> This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights or obligations under the WTO.

<sup>2</sup> For the reports of these workshops, see G/SPS/R/32 and G/SPS/R/47, respectively.

7. The 2007 workshop concluded with a number of recommendations to the SPS Committee and/or the Secretariat on which significant progress has been made:

- (a) The SPS Committee adopted the revised Recommended Procedures for Implementing the Transparency Obligations of the SPS Agreement (G/SPS/7/Rev.3) in May 2008<sup>3</sup>, based on inputs from the 2007 workshop.
- (b) The Secretariat circulated a document regarding the timeframes related to the introduction of new SPS measures in February 2008 (G/SPS/GEN/819).
- (c) Based on a proposal from New Zealand, the Secretariat has been facilitating a mentoring mechanism among Enquiry Points and Notification Authorities since the summer of 2008 (G/SPS/W/217).
- (d) The Secretariat has been providing annual updates on the level of implementation of transparency provisions (G/SPS/GEN/804 and its Revisions).
- (e) The Secretariat has been further developing and providing training on the SPS Information Management System (SPS IMS) during SPS Committee meetings and technical assistance and outreach activities.<sup>4</sup> The SPS IMS could serve as a vehicle for identifying notifications of interest and preparing newsletters/alerts at the national level.
- (f) The Secretariat is working on developing an online mechanism for submission of SPS notifications. It is expected that this facility will be operational by the October 2010 transparency workshop.
- (g) The Enquiry Point of New Zealand, with the assistance of Australia and the WTO Secretariat, has prepared a step-by-step procedural manual for Enquiry Points and Notification Authorities. This manual is available in English, French and Spanish, in hard copy and in pdf format through the WTO's SPS gateway.<sup>5</sup>

8. In addition to the above, the 2007 workshop identified the following actions which could be taken at the national/regional level to complement these efforts:

- (a) Awareness-raising activities at the national level;
- (b) More proactive involvement in the identification of technical assistance needs;
- (c) Using international standards as a point of departure for national legislation and participating actively in the work of the international standard-setting bodies;
- (d) Consideration of the development of websites at the national or regional level;
- (e) Further information exchange and sharing of best practices at the bilateral/plurilateral/regional level and use of appropriate regional entities; and
- (f) More active use of the FAO International Portal.

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<sup>3</sup> The Recommended Procedures took effect on 1 December 2008.

<sup>4</sup> <http://spsims.wto.org>.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/transparency\\_toolkit\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/transparency_toolkit_e.htm).

9. In an effort to ensure that this third workshop adds value, Members and Observers are invited to provide suggestions for the programme by Friday, 2 July. In addition, delegations interested in sharing their experiences in implementing and benefiting from the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement, including in the areas referred to in paragraph 8, are strongly encouraged to contact the Secretariat by Friday, 2 July to arrange for a brief intervention during the workshop.

10. For further enquiries on the workshop, please contact Ms. Serra Ayrál (tel: +41 22 739 5465; fax: +41 22 739 5760; e-mail: [serra.ayral@wto.org](mailto:serra.ayral@wto.org)) or Mr. Robson Fernandes (tel: +41 22 739 6437; fax: +41 22 739-5760, e-mail: [robson.fernandes@wto.org](mailto:robson.fernandes@wto.org)).

## ANNEX

### DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR TRANSPARENCY WORKSHOP

**Monday, 18 October 2010**

- 10.00 – 10.15      Opening remarks by the Chair
- 10.15 – 10.45      Session I: Introduction  
Speaker(s): WTO Secretariat
- *Orientation remarks for funded participants*
  - *Overview of transparency provisions in the SPS Agreement and of relevant Committee/ Ministerial Decisions*
  - *Presentation of Members' level of implementation of transparency provisions and decisions*
  - *Indication of existing WTO reference materials/tools*
- 10.45 – 11.05      Session II: The SPS Information Management System  
Speaker: WTO Secretariat
- 11.05 – 11.20      Session III: STDF update on initiatives to improve the functioning of Enquiry Points / Notification Authorities  
Speaker: STDF Secretariat
- 11.20 – 12.50      Session IV: Sharing of experiences  
Speaker(s): Representatives of Members / Observers
- Interventions on the following possible topics:
- *How to raise awareness on the economic benefits of a transparent system?*
  - *How to facilitate and regularize preparation of notification?*
  - *How to best take advantage of incoming notifications?*
  - *How to establish a sustainable coordination mechanism at the national level involving public and private stakeholders?*
  - *How to devise an effective technical assistance project to improve the functioning of Enquiry Points/Notification Authorities?*
  - *How to benefit from regional initiatives?*
- 12.50 – 13.00      Session V: Setting the stage for the four breakout sessions of the afternoon  
Speaker: WTO Secretariat
- 13.00 – 15.00      Lunch break
- 15.00 – 17.00      Session VI: Breakout sessions with four groups (two in English, one in French, and one in Spanish)
- *Participants to come up with recommendations for action in light of the topics covered in the morning based on a list of questions to be used by the facilitators of each group.*

17.00 – 18.00 Session VII: Reporting on breakout sessions by rapporteurs followed by general discussion

**Tuesday, 19 October**

10.00 – 18.00 Participation in informal meeting(s) of SPS Committee

**Wednesday, 20 October**

10.00 – 18.00 Participation in SPS Committee meetings

**Thursday, 21 October**

10.00 – 18.00 Participation in SPS Committee meetings

**Friday, 22 October**

10.00 – 11.30 Session VIII: Practical session on how to prepare notifications  
Facilitators: WTO Secretariat; Australia and New Zealand Contact Points

- *Why should Members notify?*
- *What should be notified and when?*
- *Who should notify?*
- *What format should be used?*
- *Who should it be sent to?*
- *Who could be consulted with questions?*
- *How does the on-line submission facility work?*

11.30 – 11.45 Break

11.45 – 13.00 Session IX: Practical session on how to react to notifications  
Facilitators: WTO Secretariat; Australia and New Zealand Contact Points

- *How does the SPS IMS work?*
- *Who should track incoming notifications?*
- *How could notifications of interest be identified?*
- *With whom should they be shared?*
- *How could comments be collected?*
- *How should they be shared with the notifying Member?*

13.00 – 15.00 Lunch break

15.00 – 16.30 Session X: Wrap-up and identification of follow-up actions  
Facilitators: WTO Secretariat

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