

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

PROGRAMME FOR THE WORKSHOP ON TRANSPARENCY

Note by the Secretariat¹

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), is funding the participation of about 50 government officials from Enquiry Points and Notification Authorities of developing and least-developed country Members and Observers. It is expected that the workshop will not only enhance the participants' knowledge on transparency issues but also allow for exchange of ideas as well as national and personal experiences.
5. The last SPS transparency workshop was held in 2007. It 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 2008², 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 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).

¹ 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.

² The Recommended Procedures took effect on 1 December 2008.

- (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.³ 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 in the process of developing an online mechanism for submission of SPS notifications, a test version of which will be presented at the 2010 workshop. This facility will become fully operational by early 2011.
- (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 electronically through the WTO's SPS gateway.⁴

6. 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.

7. The 2010 workshop programme contained in the Annex was prepared taking into account the past two transparency workshops held in 2003 and 2007,⁵ the Committee's discussions on this topic, as well as specific inputs from Members. The first day of the workshop (Monday, 18 October) will provide for an overview of transparency issues⁶ and allow for exchange of national experiences in the plenary and during break-out sessions. The second day of the workshop (Friday, 22 October) will be more hands-on with practical exercises on notifications. The Secretariat will demonstrate how to use the SPS Information Management System (SPS IMS) and the new on-line notifications submissions facility with the help of about 40 computers which will be installed for this purpose. Participants may wish to bring their own computers to participate in the hands-on exercises on Friday. In addition, there will be a presentation on the FAO International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health (IPFSAPH) on Wednesday, 20 October during the lunch break.

8. For further enquiries on the workshop, please contact Serra Ayril (tel: +41 22 739 5465, e-mail: serra.ayral@wto.org), Pablo Jenkins (tel: +41 22 739 6341, e-mail: pablo.jenkins@wto.org) or Robson Fernandes (tel: +41 22 739 6437, e-mail: robson.fernandes@wto.org).

³ <http://spsims.wto.org>.

⁴ http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/transparency_toolkit_e.htm.

⁵ For the reports of these workshops, see G/SPS/R/32 and G/SPS/R/47, respectively.

⁶ See Secretariat background document entitled "Overview Regarding the Level of Implementation of the Transparency Provisions of the SPS Agreement" (G/SPS/GEN/804/Rev.3).

ANNEX

PROGRAMME FOR THE WORKSHOP ON TRANSPARENCY

Monday, 18 October 2010 (Council Room)

- 10.00 – 10.15 **Opening remarks by Flavio Soares Damico, Chair of the SPS Committee**
- 10.15 – 10.45 **Session I: Introduction**
- Speakers: Gretchen Stanton, Serra Ayral and Pablo Jenkins, WTO Secretariat
- *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 (G/SPS/GEN/804/Rev.3)*
 - *Indication of existing WTO reference materials/tools, including the SPS IMS*
- 10.45 – 12.45 **Session II: Sharing of national experiences in the plenary**
- 10.45 - 10.55 Why notify? What are the benefits of notifications? What are the costs when notifications are not forthcoming?
- Speaker: Paul Vitolovich, Manager, SPS Section, Trade and Market Access Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry, Australia
- 10.55 – 11.05 How to facilitate and regularize the preparation of notifications?
- Speaker: Andrea Spencer, Coordinator, Enquiry Point, Standards Council of Canada
- 11.05 – 11.15 How to best take advantage of incoming notifications?
- Speaker: Fabián Sáez, Unidad de Relaciones Internacionales, Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria, Argentina
- 11.15 – 11.25 How to raise awareness at the national level? How to develop a website on notifications?
- Speaker: Verónica Bustamante Estrada, Dirección de Administración de Tratados Comerciales, Ministerio de Economía, El Salvador
- 11.25 – 11.40 Questions/comments on presentations
- 11.40 – 11.50 How to devise an effective technical assistance project to improve the functioning of Enquiry Points/Notification Authorities?
- Speaker: Alhousseynou Moctar Hanne, Head of Plant Quarantine and SPS Enquiry Point, Ministry of Agriculture, Senegal

- 11.50 – 12.10 How to maximize benefits from a bilateral technical assistance project?
Speakers: Sally Jennings, SPS Contact Point, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, New Zealand and Dr. Ibraheem A. AL Sheddy, Saudi Food and Drug Authority, Saudi Arabia
- 12.10 – 12.20 STDF update on initiatives to improve coordination at the national level
Speaker: Melvin Spreij, Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) Secretariat
- 12.20 – 12.50 Questions/comments on presentations
- 12.50 – 13.00 Setting the stage for the break-out sessions of the afternoon
Speaker: WTO Secretariat
- 13.00 – 15.00 Lunch break
- 15.00 – 18.00** **Session III: What actions could improve the implementation and benefits of SPS transparency provisions?**
- 15.00 – 17.00 Breakout sessions with four groups (two in English, one in French, and one in Spanish). Participants will propose 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.
Facilitators: WTO Secretariat
- 17.00 – 18.00 Reporting on breakout sessions by rapporteurs in the plenary followed by general discussion.

Wednesday, 20 October (Room B)

- 14.00 – 14.45** Presentation on the FAO International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health (IPFSAPH)
Speaker: Judith Crews, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Tuesday, 19 October

- 15.00 – 18.00 Informal meetings of the SPS Committee (see WTO/AIR/3608)

Wednesday, 20 October

- 10.00 – 18.00 Regular meetings of the SPS Committee (see WTO/AIR/3608)

Thursday, 21 October

- 10.00 – 18.00 Regular meetings of the SPS Committee (see WTO/AIR/3608)

Friday, 22 October (Council Room)

10.00 – 11.30

Session IV: Practical session on how to prepare notifications

Facilitators: Serra Ayrál, Pablo Jenkins, Iffet Kayili-Lejeune, and Galina Davis-Konandreas, WTO Secretariat; Sally Jennings, New Zealand Contact Point

- *What should be notified and when?*
- *Who should notify?*
- *What format should be used?*
- *Who could be consulted with questions during preparations?*
- *To whom should notifications be sent?*
- *How does the new on-line submission facility work?(presentation and exercise)*

11.30 – 11.45

Coffee/tea and croissants offered by the WTO

11.45 – 13.00

Session V: Practical session on how to track incoming notifications

Facilitators: Serra Ayrál, Pablo Jenkins and Iffet Kayili-Lejeune, WTO Secretariat; Sally Jennings, New Zealand Contact Point

- *Who could/should track incoming notifications?*
- *How could notifications of interest be identified and shared with stakeholders?*
- *How could comments on incoming notifications be collected and shared with notifying Member?*
- *How does the SPS IMS work?(presentation and exercise)*

13.00 – 15.00

Lunch break

15.00 – 16.00

Session V: Practical session on how to track incoming notifications – continued

Facilitators: Serra Ayrál, Pablo Jenkins and Iffet Kayili-Lejeune, WTO Secretariat; Sally Jennings, New Zealand Contact Point

- *Group exercise with sample notification*

16.00 – 17.00

Session VI: Identification of follow-up actions and evaluation of workshop

Facilitators: Serra Ayrál, Pablo Jenkins and Iffet Kayili-Lejeune, WTO Secretariat; Sally Jennings, New Zealand Contact Point
