

**NOTIFICATION RELATING TO THE PRESENTATION OF THE OFFICIAL MOROCCAN
AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTO
SPS AGREEMENT AND SERVING AS THE SPS ENQUIRY POINT**

Communication from Morocco

The following communication, received on 23 August 2010, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Morocco.

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1. In the context of the implementation of the *Plan Maroc vert* (Green Morocco Plan), a strategy launched by His Majesty the King with a view to turning the agricultural sector into a lever for the economic and social development of Morocco, the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries has created the National Office for Food Safety (ONSSA), established by Law No. 25-08 promulgated by Dahir No. 1-09-20 of 22 *Safar* 1430 (18 February 2009). The ONSSA brings together the veterinary services which came under the former Livestock Directorate and the services which came under the former Plant Protection, Technical Inspection and Anti-Fraud Directorate, which until 31 December 2009 served as the enquiry points for sanitary and phytosanitary matters respectively.
2. The ONSSA is a public agency with legal personality and financial autonomy. It is attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries.
3. The ONSSA performs functions on behalf of the State relating to the protection of consumer health and animal and plant health at every stage of the food chain. It is the national authority responsible for SPS negotiations to facilitate trade in animals, plants, animal and plant products and animal feed.
4. To that end, the tasks assigned to the former Directorates (the Livestock (Veterinary Services) Directorate and the Plant Protection, Technical Inspection and Anti-Fraud Directorate) concerning sanitary and phytosanitary matters have been transferred to the ONSSA, which is the competent authority responsible, in accordance with the laws and regulations in force, for the following tasks:
 - Plant and animal health and food safety from the raw materials to the end consumer, including food intended for use as animal feed;

- protection of the health of the country's plant and animal life and control of plant and animal products and products of plant and animal origin, including fishery products, during import, export and in the domestic market;
- animal health surveillance and control of their identification and movements;
- application of the regulations in force relating to veterinary and phytosanitary health conditions;
- analysis of the potential consumer health risks posed by food products and animal feed as well as the threats posed by pathogens to the health of plants and animals;
- control of plant and animal diseases, plant and animal products, food products, animal feed, veterinary drugs and any other products intended for use in veterinary medicine or surgery;
- granting health permits or approvals, as applicable, for establishments in which food products and animal feed are produced, made, processed, handled, transported, stored, preserved or sold, with the exception of fish markets, fishing vessels, floating barges and units engaged in the treatment, production, processing, packaging or preservation of marine fishing products and by-products;
- issuing opinions on the sanitary compliance of the marine fishing establishments referred to in the preceding paragraph prior to their approval;
- registration of veterinary drugs and veterinary pharmaceutical establishments;
- control of food additives, packaging material and products and materials liable to come into contact with food products as well as with fertilizers and irrigation water;
- authorization and/or registration of livestock farms;
- approval of pesticides and of establishments producing, importing or exporting pesticides;
- certification of seeds and seedlings and approval of establishments producing, importing or exporting seeds and seedlings.

5. In addition, the ONSSA is responsible for the follow-up to Codex Alimentarius work and, to that end, it provides the secretariat for the National Codex Alimentarius Committee created by Decree No. 2-03-140 of 6 *Hija* 1425 (17 January 2005). It also serves as the enquiry point for the World Trade Organization's Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), is responsible for implementing the SPS Agreement and represents Morocco within the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

6. It should be noted that the ONSSA comprises the following decentralized services: ten regional directorates, 41 provincial veterinary services, 43 provincial services for the control of plant products and products of plant origin, 43 provincial plant protection services, seven regional veterinary analysis and research laboratories, one national laboratory for the control of veterinary drugs and five directorates responsible for control and quality at border posts.

7. The ONSSA is the official Moroccan authority responsible for the focal points relating to the following international organizations:

- Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme (Codex Alimentarius Commission): Secretariat of the National Codex Alimentarius Committee;
- WTO for the implementation of the SPS Agreement: enquiry point for SPS measures;
- OIE: National Delegate representing Morocco before the OIE;
- International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC): Moroccan contact point.

8. It should be noted, moreover, that in connection with the implementation of the SPS Agreement the Moroccan Government set up a national SPS Committee by Prime Ministerial Decree. This Committee, whose secretariat function has been entrusted to the ONSSA, is responsible for:

- Proposing actions to implement the WTO SPS Agreement;
- studying sanitary and phytosanitary measures taken by WTO Members and reporting the results to the authorities and professionals concerned;
- participating in the drafting of the proposals that Morocco plans to submit to the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures;
- transmitting to members of the national SPS Committee all notifications received and made by WTO Members;
- informing trade partners of the implementation of new international regulations and standards relating to the safety of animal and plant products and to animal and plant health;
- contributing to the incorporation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures in economic and social development programmes and preparing any relevant recommendations in that respect;
- coordinating and organizing sanitary and phytosanitary awareness campaigns in cooperation with the competent State agencies and institutions;
- contributing to the dissemination of the results of the work and studies conducted at the national and international levels in the sanitary and phytosanitary area.

9. The decree setting up this national SPS Committee was notified to the WTO and published in Official Journal No. 5862 of 5 August 2010. It can be downloaded from the ONSSA website: <http://www.onssa.gov.ma>.
