

**NATIONAL SPS WORKSHOP ORGANIZED BY THE WTO IN  
MOROCCO (RABAT) ON 18 AND 19 SEPTEMBER 2012**

Communication from Morocco

The following communication, received on 9 October 2012, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Morocco.

1. In the framework of its SPS technical assistance activities in 2012 (G/SPS/GEN/997/Rev.2) and in cooperation with the Moroccan National Office for Food Safety (ONSSA, ANN and PNI), the WTO SPS Committee organized a national workshop on the WTO SPS Agreement in Morocco on 18-19 September 2012. This was made possible by the direct financial support of the Belgian Development Agency (BTC), which mobilized funds for the organization of this activity in Morocco.

2. This was an information workshop for technical staff working under the national authorities responsible for sanitary and phytosanitary control. It also aimed to inform private operators and professionals and to raise their awareness of the importance of the SPS Agreement and the economic and social impact of SPS measures on international trade and the economy, particularly in the developing countries.

3. The programme involved the following presentations:

**1. Introduction to the World Trade Organization and to the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures:**

- Brief history of the multilateral trading system
- Non-tariff measures in international trade
- History of the SPS Agreement
- Definition of SPS measures

**2. Key principles of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures:**

- Scientific justification
- Harmonization
- Risk assessment
- Precautionary measures
- Coherence
- Least trade-restrictive measures
- Equivalence
- Regionalization

- Control, inspection and approval procedures
- Special and differential treatment

**3. Morocco's main concerns in the sanitary and phytosanitary area, with respect to animal health, plant health and food and feed safety**

**4. SPS Committee: Function and role**

- Participation and meetings
- Specific trade concerns and options for resolving them
- Topical issues in the SPS Committee: special and differential treatment, private standards, review of the SPS Agreement

**5. Morocco's experience with the implementation of the SPS Agreement**

**6. Trade-related technical assistance - activities of the WTO and the STDF**

4. The workshop ended with a self-assessment test and discussions on the topics presented. It was attended by 60 Administration staff, 20 private-sector professionals and representatives of two technical journals. The opening ceremony was chaired by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fisheries, in the presence of the Minister-Counsellor of the Embassy of Belgium in Rabat and the Director-General of the ONSSA.

5. The workshop was widely covered by the written media, radio and television:

- Printed media: eight articles
- Electronic media: eight sites
- Radio: three stations
- Television: two channels

All those present (representatives of the Administration and the private sector) expressed their satisfaction and agreed that the workshop had been a success.

6. Morocco would like to extend its sincere thanks to the WTO, and particularly to Mr Rolando Alcala for his expertise and his support for the activities of the workshop.

7. Morocco would also like to thank the BTC for its financial support which enabled Morocco to organize this event in excellent conditions.

8. Morocco would like to stress the importance of organizing these national workshops, particularly on behalf of the developing countries, and invites developed Member countries to undertake to help these countries to implement the SPS Agreement and support the competent authorities in these areas.

---