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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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## NATIONAL SPS WORKSHOP IN OCTOBER 2012

### COMMUNICATION FROM BOTSWANA

The following communication, received on 6 March 2013, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Botswana.

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1. Within the WTO's framework for trade related technical assistance and training (TRTAs) activities in 2012 (G/SPS/GEN/997/Rev.2) and in cooperation with the Department of Agribusiness, Division of Agriculture Trade, Ministry of Agriculture in Botswana, the WTO Secretariat organized a national workshop on the WTO SPS Agreement in Botswana from 23 to 25 October 2012.

2. The purpose of the workshop was to enhance capacity and understanding amongst participants and technical officers responsible for sanitary and phytosanitary measures. In addition, the workshop also sought to raise SPS awareness among private companies and quasi-governmental organizations affected by sanitary and phytosanitary measures, particularly on how to rely on the SPS Agreement to ensure that such measures do not act as unnecessary barriers to international trade.

3. The workshop programme covered the following topics:

- Why the SPS Agreement; what it covers; its main provisions;
- The structure, functions, and procedures of the SPS Committee;
- Recent topics of discussion in the SPS Committee;
- How to implement and benefit from the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement (including hands-on training on notifications, the SPS IMS and the SPS NSS);
- How to address trade problems linked to SPS measures; and
- How to improve coordination at national and regional levels.

4. The workshop then identified particular follow-up actions regarding transparency and coordination. Subsequently, a follow-up session was organized and held one month after the workshop on 27 November 2012 to enhance retention and understanding of main provisions/procedures of the SPS Agreement; work on notifications from Botswana; and reconsider structure and function of the national coordinating body. Further, it provided an opportunity to close gaps in understanding; run more advanced exercises; and hear about progress on follow-up actions and fine-tune them. After the workshop and the follow-up session, the Ministry is actively working on notifications to be submitted in due course, while work on proposals to strengthen national coordination also continues.

5. The Government of Botswana, specifically the Ministry of Agriculture, would like to express its profound appreciation to the WTO Secretariat for this workshop and particularly Ms Serra Ayril from the Agriculture and Commodities Division for her expert knowledge and guidance during the activities of this workshop. In addition, Botswana acknowledges the importance of national workshops for developing countries in an effort to help implement various agreements and welcomes similar activities in Botswana in the future.

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