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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**SANITARY STATUS CONCERNING FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE  
2013**

**COMMUNICATION FROM PARAGUAY**

The following communication, dated 21 March 2013, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Paraguay.

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1. The outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) that occurred in September 2011 and at the beginning of January 2012 in the department of San Pedro had a severe impact on the country's health and economic situation. Following immediate notification to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the latter suspended, with effect from 18 September 2011, Paraguay's FMD-free zone status with vaccination, which had been recognized by the OIE World Assembly of Delegates in Resolution No. XXI of the 75<sup>th</sup> General Session of May 2007. The status of the other FMD-free area with vaccination corresponding to the high-surveillance zone (former HSZ) was also suspended, with effect from 5 December 2011.

2. As a result of the outbreaks, the Standing Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP) entrusted the Pan-American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO) with the overall co-ordination of clinical sero-epidemiological sampling for the detection of FMD virus, with support from CVP experts from various countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay) in order to monitor activities at all stages of the study. As requested by the CVP, PANAFTOSA was involved in everything from developing the sampling plan to carrying out the sample collection, animal inspections, complementary investigations and laboratory diagnostic tests (ELISA 3ABC, EITB and subsequently the Probang test and ELISA for sheep and goats), as well as preparing the report detailing the final conclusions.

3. As a result of the immediate response by the animal health emergency system the problem was declared officially resolved on 9 March 2012, in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the OIE Terrestrial Code, as well as those established in the PANAFTOSA Manual of Procedures for Attention to Occurrences of FMD and other Vesicular Diseases.

4. The outbreaks of FMD proved a great challenge for the country and its National Animal Quality and Health Service (SENACSA). Paraguay efficiently demonstrated its capacity to respond immediately to adverse health events, undertaking a major overhaul of the health system and introducing plans for far-reaching changes to the country's vaccination and surveillance systems.

5. It is important to note that these actions were recognized by several trading partners, thus enabling Paraguay to recover more than 34 bovine meat export markets to date.

6. The sampling process also aimed to meet the requirements laid down by the OIE, and its results and conclusions will be submitted to the latter in order to request the reinstatement of Paraguay as a country free from FMD.

7. We wish to thank PANAFTOSA, the CVP for their cooperation, as well as the experts from neighbouring countries who participated in the aforementioned process. Our thanks also go to the European Union for the training it provided for national technicians, and the importing countries for the trust they have shown by resuming imports of meat and meat products from Paraguay.

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