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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**ACTIONS AIMED AT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTO AGREEMENT
ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

**INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE
FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA)**

The following communication, received on 26 June 2015, is being circulated at the request of the IICA.

1. The observer organizations of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) are invited to submit reports on the activities they have carried out to promote the understanding and implementation of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). The IICA would like to present some of the actions and activities that it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

1 EFFORTS TO MAKE GREATER USE OF MULTILATERAL FORUMS

1.1 World Trade Organization

2. As part of the EU-CARIFORUM SPS project, under its component aimed at strengthening the multilateral trading system, support was provided for the participation of two Caribbean countries (Belize and Jamaica) in the 63rd session of the World Trade Organization Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee). This effort was made with a view to developing and encouraging the leadership of these countries in the region.

3. As part of this effort to reposition the SPS Committee agenda in the Caribbean region, the IICA will support the WTO in a regional workshop that will take place at the end of 2015.

4. In April 2015, the IICA provided support for a national workshop on sanitary and phytosanitary measures that was organized by the WTO in Honduras.

1.2 Codex Alimentarius

5. Within the framework of the EU-CARIFORUM SPS project, under its component aimed at strengthening the multilateral trading system, support was provided for the participation of all the Caribbean IICA member countries in the 38th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Some of these countries were unable to attend due to the lack of political support for participation in this forum - something which is becoming an important area of intervention for the IICA (political positioning of the Codex Alimentarius). This project also supports the Dominican Republic's participation in the Codex meeting on veterinary drug residues.

6. As part of the Programme to Promote Participation in the Codex Alimentarius in the Americas (IICA-Codex Programme), support was provided for the participation of eight countries in the Codex meeting on veterinary drug residues, held in Costa Rica in April, and for three countries in the 38th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in July.

7. In June 2015, the second Codex Colloquium of the year was held in the Americas. It focused on the issues of the 38th session of the Codex Alimentarius and was special in that it was bi-regional, with participants from both Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa. It was the first of its kind and the results were extremely positive.

8. In total, 69 delegates from 45 countries and 3 organizations (IICA, AU-IBAR, Codex Alimentarius, through one of its Vice-chairpersons) participated in the Colloquium. 37% of the countries present were African and 60% Latin American and Caribbean. The US delegation accounted for 3% of the participants.

9. This bi-regional Colloquium achieved the following:

- it promoted closer ties and the facilitation of dialogue between the CCLAC and CCAFRICA regions in respect of strategic Codex Alimentarius issues;
- it fostered open dialogue between the regions on the most important issues that are to be examined at the 38th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission; and
- it promoted collaboration and the identification of issues of interest between the regions with a view to conducting bi-regional work.

10. The bi-regional Colloquium and most of the work carried out in relation to the Codex Alimentarius has the financial support of the United States Department of Agriculture.

11. Thanks to this IICA-Codex programme, support has been provided in five areas of fundamental importance to IICA member countries: (i) effective participation in the Codex Alimentarius; (ii) capacity building; (iii) institutional strengthening; (iv) promotion of science as a basis for adopting standards; and (v) development of effective communication as a mechanism for reaching consensus and establishing positions in the interests of the region.

1.3 World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)

12. As part of the EU-CARIFORUM SPS project, under its component aimed at strengthening the multilateral trading system, support was provided for the participation of nine Caribbean countries in the 83rd General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

2 SUPPORT FOR STRENGTHENING OF THE INSTITUTIONAL, TECHNICAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

13. As part of the its training programmes for member countries on new legislation that significantly impacts trade, the IICA has, since 2014, been working on building up capacity to meet the United States' new safety requirements.

14. Workshops aimed at the public and private sectors have recently been held in Colombia, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago to promote the understanding and implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

15. As an example of the methodology used, a training workshop on requirements governing the export of food to the US market and the FSMA approach was held in Colombia from 25 to 29 May. This workshop took place in Bogotá and was transmitted online to 7 provinces in the country. 260 people participated in the workshop (100 in person and 160 online). Afterwards, visits were made to 3 fresh fruit- and vegetable-exporting companies in Bogotá, Medellín and Cali to establish how prepared they were to meet FSMA requirements. As a result, producers', exporters' and public and private entities' understanding of the regulations proposed by the FSMA was improved.