

**REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The following communication was received from the Republic of Zambia.

In the Republic of Zambia, issues relating to the SPS Agreement are dealt with by four departments, one of which falls within the Ministry of Health and the remaining three fall under the Ministry of Agriculture. Issues relating to food safety are dealt with by Ministry of Health, and issues relating to plants and animals are dealt with by Ministry of Agriculture. Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry is the Enquiry Point and National Notification Authority.

Therefore, effective implementation of the SPS Agreement largely depends on the ability of the above-mentioned departments to participate in the work of standards-setting bodies and the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. At the moment participation in the activities of the standard-setting bodies is limited by lack of financial resources.

It would also be important to upgrade infrastructure and ensure that SPS measures maintained have sufficient scientific evidence. Therefore assistance would be required to upgrade the following laboratories, as well as build human resource capacity to effectively deal with SPS issues:

1. **The Plant Quarantine Laboratories and Biosystemics** is based at Mount Makulu. The facilities need to be upgraded and officers require international exposure to familiarize them with foreign pests. The bio systemics will require refurbishing to enhance rapid responses to inquiries.
2. **The Herbage Chemistry (HC)** lab for testing fertilizers, stock, feed, planting media compost and water for conformity.
3. **The Seed Health Testing and Control Laboratory**
4. **National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research**, assistance would be required to acquire various standards for mycotoxin testing.
5. **National Food and Drugs Laboratory** needs to be strengthened in verifying conformity of standards in additives, pesticides residues and food safety.

Other areas where technical assistance is required include the following:

- Raising awareness among the business community and the public in general on issues relating to SPS;
- Training of officials at border posts and provision of necessary equipment so as to increase technical capacity to handle SPS-related issues;

- Creation of an appropriate data base within the Ministry of Commerce on SPS to facilitate the work of the Ministry as enquiry point and national notification authority;
  - Equipping the technical departments with relevant scientific and technical information.
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