



## PROCEDURE TO MONITOR THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION

### SUBMISSION BY NEW ZEALAND

The following document, received on 31 October 2020, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of New Zealand.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. A major objective of the WTO SPS Agreement is to promote international harmonisation based on standards and guidelines established by relevant International Standard Setting Bodies (ISSBs). Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement envisaged the SPS Committee develop a procedure to monitor the process on international harmonization and coordinate efforts in this regard with the relevant international organizations.

1.2. Over the last 20 years there has been significant discussion on monitoring the process of international harmonization and the use of international standards, guidelines or recommendations, as provided for in Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement. It was first addressed at its October 1997 meeting, the Committee has since extended the provisional monitoring procedure in 1999, 2001, and 2003, and the revised the procedure again in October 2004. In 2006, the Committee agreed to extend the provisional procedure indefinitely, and to review its operation as an integral part of the periodic review of the operation and implementation of the Agreement under Article 12.7. This procedure was reviewed as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Review.

1.3. In recent years there has been renewed discussion by the international standards bodies on the use and impact of their standards.

#### 2 CURRENT MONITORING UNDERTAKING BY THE RELEVANT STANDARD-SETTING ORGANIZATIONS

2.1. The IPPC has reported on the activities of the Implementation Review and Support System (IRSS), including a general survey on the IPPC and use of its standards. The IPPC secretariat and the IRSS program are assisting member countries to better fulfil related IPPC obligations.

2.2. The OIE has initiated an observatory project with the aim of assessing the implementation of standards as outlined in the Codes and Manuals in the international trade in animals and animal products, and what the impediments are to their implementation. The project is at an early stage and is considering metrics that can be used in the assessment. The scope of the work is viewed as very broad and ambitious.

2.3. Codex is exploring the issue in relation to its parent bodies (FAO/WHO), as significant funds are used to develop standards. The new Codex Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 includes a specific goal that seeks to 'increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex Standards' and has identified a number of actions it could take to promote uptake and use of its standards and guidelines.

### **3 PROPOSED REVISION OF HARMONIZATION - THE USE AND IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES**

3.1. Against this background New Zealand believes there is merit in promoting some discussion on what further role the SPS Committee could play in assisting the ISSBs in monitoring the use and implementation of international standards as laid out in Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement.

3.2. Initially New Zealand would like to suggest the Secretariat invite Members and the ISSBs, to propose ideas and suggestions for the best approach to explore the provisions of monitoring the use of international standards as referred to in Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement.

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