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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR THEMATIC SESSION ON PROCEDURE TO  
MONITOR THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION**

**TUESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2021  
WTO, CENTRE WILLIAM RAPPARD, GENEVA**

COMMUNICATION FROM NEW ZEALAND

The following document, received on 22 August 2021, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of New Zealand.

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PROPOSED PROGRAMME

The thematic session will provide an opportunity for Members of the WTO to exchange views and review progress with international harmonization. The WTO SPS Agreement places considerable importance on international harmonization by encouraging Members to harmonize their measures, to the maximum extent possible, with the standards, guidelines and recommendations established by the relevant international standard-setting bodies. Article 3.2 of the SPS Agreement provides a significant impetus to international harmonization by stating that that "sanitary and phytosanitary measures which conform to international standards, guidelines or recommendations shall be deemed to be necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health...". There is also renewed interest among the relevant international standard-setting bodies to have a better understanding of the extent to which their standards and related texts are used. Further, and in terms of Article 3.5, the SPS Committee has an important role in monitoring the process of international harmonization in close collaboration with the relevant international standard-setting bodies.

This thematic session will focus on three broad areas:

1. The provisions of Article 3 of the SPS Agreement with respect to international harmonization, including a particular focus on Article 3.5 and the actions taken thus far to monitor the process of international harmonization;
2. The actions and initiatives that Codex, OIE and the IPPC have taken to monitor the impact and use of their standards, guidelines and recommendations, and consideration of opportunities for coordination between these standard-setting bodies and the SPS Committee as envisaged under Article 3.5; and
3. Member countries' approaches, experiences and challenges with the use of international standards at the national and regional levels, and consideration of actions and initiatives to support uptake and use of international standards.

**1 RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE SPS AGREEMENT AND WORK OF THE SPS COMMITTEE**

**Speaker:** WTO Secretariat

*Followed by Q&A session and discussion*

## **2 OVERVIEW: INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND HARMONIZATION**

International standard-setting bodies - their priorities and interest, and their own initiatives to monitor the uptake and use of their standards, guidelines and recommendations.

**Speakers:**

- **Codex Alimentarius**
- **OIE**
- **IPPC**

*Followed by Q&A session and discussion*

## **3 SHARING OF NATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

Member countries - share their thoughts on their approach and experience with regard to use of international standards covering any particular issues or challenges that they might face in respect of implementation and harmonization.

**Speakers:** *TBC*

*Followed by Q&A session and discussion*

## **4 INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

Regional/cross border cooperation and action by possible organizations – such as STDF, regional economic communities under the African Union - which are currently pursuing harmonization of standards, and countries who are utilizing the Codex Trust Fund. A few at various levels of engagement are Ghana, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, and Bolivia, as well as groups of countries (Kenya/Tanzania/South Sudan/Uganda/Burundi and El Salvador/Guatemala). Other possible speakers include: OIRSA, FAO and OECD.

**Speakers:** *TBC*

*Followed by Q&A session and discussion*

## **5 CLOSING REMARKS**

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