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Page: 1/2

**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

Original: English

## **PROCEDURE TO MONITOR THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION**

### **SUBMISSION BY NEW ZEALAND**

The following document, received on 2 March 2022, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of New Zealand.

1. New Zealand presented its first proposal on this topic as document [G/SPS/GEN/1851](#) in the November 2020 Committee meeting. Members and International Standard Setting Bodies (ISSBs) were invited to propose ideas and suggestions on how the Committee could proactively explore this topic. Subsequently, New Zealand submitted document [G/SPS/GEN/1877](#) which presented some specific ideas for consideration by the Committee. There was overall support for the New Zealand proposal. Taking the comments from other Members, New Zealand subsequently circulated document [G/SPS/GEN/1915](#). This document proposed several areas of focus, which provided the basis for the thematic session on international harmonization held as part of the SPS November 2021 meeting.

2. At that thematic session, several Members agreed to the importance of having additional in-depth discussions on the next steps.

3. New Zealand believes there are various avenues to assist the ISSBs in more effectively monitoring the use of the implementation of international standards as laid out in Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement. New Zealand would like to propose that the SPS Committee further explore and discuss in more detail the following ideas for action and delivery in 2022-2023:

- Reviewing (in consultation with the ISSBs) the notification template to gather more specific information on international harmonization and ensure that useful data can be extracted from the WTO/SPS Information Management System. In addition, discuss with the ISSBs what previous analysis may have been done to date;
- A review/analysis of Specific Trade Concerns (STCs) highlighting the themes and evidence of harmonization to ISSB standards;
- SPS Committee to receive annual reports from the ISSBs on their efforts to support implementation among their members, of adopted standards, and any common challenges that may be faced; this could be either written or oral;
- Annual discussion platform through a standard agenda item, for Members to make voluntary statements to the SPS Committee highlighting how they are contributing to harmonizing with international standards with examples or case studies of how they have based their sanitary or phytosanitary measures on international standards, guidelines or recommendations. These statements would provide a snapshot of national approaches to harmonization with international standards. A statement template could be developed to provide Members guidance on content, and ensure the information provided can be reported on in a consistent and useful format;
- Relating specifically to Article 12.4, which reads "The Committee shall develop a procedure to monitor the process of international harmonization and the use of international standards,

guidelines or recommendations. For this purpose, the Committee should, in conjunction with the relevant international organizations, establish a list of international standards, guidelines or recommendations relating to sanitary or phytosanitary measures which the Committee determines to have a major trade impact..."; review the list of international standards, guidelines and recommendations relating to sanitary or phytosanitary measures, which the Committee determines to have a major trade impact. Once the analysis has been undertaken, use the data to inform future proposals to monitor the use of the international standards.

4. To advance these suggestions, New Zealand would like to suggest a small working group to lead this work. It is envisioned that this group would work remotely and could be either capital-based experts or Geneva based representatives. New Zealand would be able to lead this working group if requested.

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