



Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

**SPS COMMITTEE THEMATIC SESSION ON RISK COMMUNICATION,
MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION**

**TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2023
WTO, CENTRE WILLIAM RAPPARD, GENEVA**

PROGRAMME¹

At its November 2022 meeting, the SPS Committee discussed holding a Thematic Session on Risk Communication, Misinformation and Disinformation on the margins of its November 2023 Committee meeting, based on proposals submitted by the United States.²

Building on the successful SPS Committee Workshop on Risk Analysis: Risk Assessment, Risk Management, and Risk Communication that was held on 12-13 July 2021³, the United States proposed a thematic session to further focus on SPS risk communication, with an emphasis on public perceptions of issues concerning food, technology, health, and the environment. The United States argued that this was a topical, relevant theme for discussion by the SPS Committee, as regulators around the world were increasingly exposed to information from a multitude of sources, some of which may have specific biases or objectives that are not science-based or risk-based and do not contribute to the development of justified SPS measures. This thematic session will explore the concepts surrounding information manipulation and their relevance within the context and implementation of the SPS Agreement. Speakers will focus on the evolution of misinformation and disinformation, including its possible effect on policy decisions, how it is being deployed around agricultural food safety issues, and how Members can identify and address it at early stages.

The thematic session will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, on Tuesday, 14 November 2023, beginning at 10:00 (CET), and continuing in the afternoon at 15:00 (CET) as necessary. The thematic session can be attended in person or virtually via Zoom. Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Spanish.

¹ This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

² [G/SPS/GEN/2067](#) and revision.

³ [SPS Committee Workshop on Risk Analysis: Risk Assessment, Risk Management, and Risk Communication](#).

Chairperson: *Mr Tayutic Mena Retana*

1 WHAT IS DISINFORMATION/MISINFORMATION?

In this session, Members and industry will discuss the origins of disinformation and misinformation with a view to understanding their significance in society today. The speakers will explore the evolution of the use of misinformation and disinformation, and the challenges they pose to risk communication.

- **Mr Zbigniew Gniatkowski**, Disinformation Response Officer, Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM), European Commission, European Union. *Challenges in times of disinformation and the EU's measures to tackle it.*
- **Ms Kirsten Grinter**, Chair, Alternative Proteins Council.
- **Dr Pablo Breuer**, Co-Founder, DISARM Foundation. *Introduction to disinformation and the DISARM Framework.*

Q&A session

2 RELEVANCE TO SPS

In this session, representatives of Members, industry, and academia will share their perspectives on current issues linked to consumer risk perception, disinformation/misinformation, and SPS risk management.

- **Ms Michelle Patel**, Deputy Director, Analysis and Insight, Food Standards Agency for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, United Kingdom.
- **Mr Lamin Jaiteh**, Principal Scientific Officer, Food Safety and Quality Authority, The Gambia. *Gambia's experience on misinformation/disinformation related to food safety issues.*
- **Mr Alejandro Rodarte**, Senior Manager of Food Safety, Research and Innovation, FoodDrinkEurope. *FoodDrinkEurope actions in food safety and the role of communication.*
- **Dr Carl Blackburn**, Food Irradiation Specialist, Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. *Irradiated food.*
- **Dr William Hallman**, Professor, Rutgers University. *The psychology of risk perception, misinformation, disinformation, and SPS risk management.*

Q&A session

3 HOW DID WE GET HERE AND WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

This session will provide examples from Members, industry, consumer organizations, and academia of the evolution and effects of SPS misinformation and disinformation, and strategies for addressing these issues, including roles and responsibilities, communicating with factcheckers, weaponization of information, social media influencers, and communicating proactively.

- **Dr Nurjanah**, Chief of Seed Importation, Centre for Plant Quarantine and Biosafety, Indonesia Quarantine Authority, Indonesia. *Indonesia's experience on risk communication: Misinformation and disinformation.*
- **Mr James Ramsay**, Head of Unit, Communications, European Food Safety Authority, European Union. *Use of societal insights in risk communication: An evidence-based approach by the European Food Safety Authority.*

- **Ms Nicole McKenzie**, Acting Section Head of Science Communication, Pest Management Regulatory Agency, Health Canada, Canada. *A public trust case study: Communicating about maximum residue limits.*
- **Mr Claudio Canales**, Advisor, Risk Communication Area, Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Quality, Chile. *Educating doubts: Risk literacy, heuristics and creative processes for communication.*
- **Mr Aaron Lavalley**, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), United States.
- **Ms Léa Auffret**, Senior International Affairs Officer, The European Consumer Organisation; and **Ms Isabelle Buscke**, Head of the EU Liaison Office, Federation of German Consumer Organisations. *The perspective of EU consumer organisations on misinformation and disinformation around food.*
- **Ms Melissa San Miguel**, President of Red Flag. *Examples of misinformation/disinformation undermining good regulation and science: A public relations and risk communication perspective.*

Q&A session

4 DISCUSSION – NEXT STEPS

This session will be an open discussion on next steps.

5 CLOSING REMARKS
