

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SPS COMMITTEE ON THE OPERATION OF  
ENQUIRY POINTS**

Contribution from Senegal

1. With a view to implementing the WTO Agreements, notably the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), Senegal has designated a national authority responsible for notifications.
2. Senegal also has national enquiry points, operating through the technical services in charge of preparing and managing standards on food safety and the protection of animal and plant health.

**I. NATIONAL NOTIFICATION AUTHORITY**

3. Under the SPS Agreement, every WTO Member is required to designate, at central government level, a national authority responsible for carrying out notification procedures. Should a government wish to adopt new sanitary or phytosanitary regulations or make amendments to an existing law which are liable to restrict trade and which differ from the relevant international standard, it must notify the WTO.
4. In application of this principle of transparency, the Directorate of Foreign Trade is the national notification authority in Senegal. It houses the WTO Reference Centre and has the task of monitoring compliance with the Organization's notification requirements. The Directorate is hence responsible for informing the WTO Secretariat, through the notification procedures, of the measures taken at national level with a view to implementing the multilateral trading rules.
5. In practice, therefore, the Directorate of Foreign Trade is the **main enquiry point** for the implementation of the SPS Agreement, since it constitutes the focal point that collects and circulates the laws and regulations notified to the WTO by Members, so as to ensure that the national technical services, the private sector and the consumer organizations involved in the development of standards on food safety and the protection of animal and plant health are kept fully informed.
6. To ensure the performance of this task, in 2001 Senegal established the National Committee for International Trade Negotiations (CNNCI), which serves as a permanent framework for consultation and coordination between the Government, the private sector and consumer organizations, on all matters concerning the implementation of bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements.
7. The CNNCI is chaired by the Minister for Trade, while the Directorate of Foreign Trade provides the permanent Secretariat. It is divided into six subcommittees:

- Subcommittee on Trade in Agricultural Products;
- Subcommittee on Trade in Goods;

- Subcommittee on Trade in Services;
- Subcommittee on TRIPS;
- Subcommittee on Trade, Investment and Development;
- Subcommittee on Trade and the Environment.

8. Issues relating to sanitary and phytosanitary measures are discussed in the Subcommittee on Trade in Agricultural Products, which is also the body in charge of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of SPS measures for the Directorate of Foreign Trade.

## **II. ENQUIRY POINTS**

9. Governments must also set up offices known as "enquiry points" to provide their trading partners with information on the application of regulations regarding food safety and the protection of animal and plant health, the existence of equivalence agreements, and risk assessment procedures and decisions.

10. In Senegal, this task is assigned to the Senegalese Standards Association (ASN).

11. The Directorate of Plant Protection is another important enquiry point regarding the application of phytosanitary measures.

### **1. The Senegalese Standards Association (ASN)**

12. Set up in July 2002 to replace the Senegalese Standards Institute (ISN), the ASN is responsible for standardization and for the national system of certification of conformity with standards. It prepares national standards, provides information, raises awareness and organizes training so as to provide economic operators in Senegal, particularly industries, distributors, consumers and government officials, with knowledge of quality tools, and the methods and procedures for the use of such tools in production enterprises and companies. The ASN promotes quality, in support of the efforts made by economic operators in this field to build partnerships in the domestic and international markets, by setting up a communication system based on the organization of documentation and information.

13. The technical work involved in developing Senegalese standards is carried out by technical committees comprising representatives of producers, consumers, scientific institutions, laboratories and central government technical services.

14. The ASN is the main national enquiry point as regards, *inter alia*, the management of sanitary and phytosanitary standards. On a technical level, it is responsible for centralizing all documentation on standards and for providing appropriate responses to questions from Members, especially when Senegal notifies the WTO of sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

### **2. The Directorate of Plant Protection (Ministry of Agriculture)**

15. The Directorate of Plant Protection is an important enquiry point for the application of measures concerning:

- The protection of plants, parts of plants, soil, manures, composts and all packaging used to transport them;

- animal and plant pest control; and
- the prevention of the introduction into Senegalese territory of quarantine diseases of plants and all packaging used to transport plants.

### **III. CONSTRAINTS FACED BY ENQUIRY POINTS**

#### **1. Coordination difficulties**

16. The dispersion of the technical services involved in standardization often makes it difficult to centralize information and ensure its availability. There is little exchange of information between structures answerable to different ministries, and the ASN is not yet entirely fulfilling its role as the national focal point for collecting and circulating information to all parties involved in the implementation of the SPS Agreement.

#### **2. Difficulties in implementing the SPS Agreement**

17. Technical services in general, as indeed the private sector, are not yet sufficiently familiar with the provisions of the SPS Agreement. Efforts to raise awareness and provide information should be made at national level, notably with assistance from the WTO Secretariat in organizing information and training seminars on the implementation of the SPS Agreement. This will promote a better understanding of the rules, particularly those on notification procedures, harmonization, equivalence and risk assessment, etc.

#### **3. Weak institutional capacity**

18. Proper implementation of the SPS Agreement poses difficulties in Senegal, as it does in all developing countries where institutional capacity is weak and inadequate in terms of human resources, their efficiency, the level of scientific and technical knowledge, and analysis and testing facilities, and where the physical infrastructure is archaic.

#### **4. Inability to take part in meetings of international standardization bodies**

19. Because of a lack of technical and financial means, Senegal, like other developing countries and LDCs, cannot contribute effectively to the development of standards by taking part in meetings of international bodies such as the FAO/CODEX Alimentarius Commission, the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) and the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). This means that Senegal's concerns are not often taken into consideration in the process of developing international standards.

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