

EXECUTIVE REPORT BY VENEZUELA

1. The Autonomous Agricultural Health Service (SASA), an institution attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Land, was established by Presidential Decree on 17 January 1992 with a view to ensuring the country's food security and its ability to compete in international markets with optimal agricultural health standards.

2. The SASA is made up of a Directorate-General, two technical divisions and four administrative support divisions. It also boasts 23 government units distributed throughout the national territory, each comprising two departments (animal health and plant health) and a diagnostic laboratory.

3. The institution is staffed by a total of 429 professionals, including 227 veterinary surgeons, 58 technical experts and nine animal technicians in the animal health department and 75 agricultural engineers and 60 technical experts in the plant health department.

4. In addition, health inspectorates are distributed around the country at 14 airports, 14 ports, six border posts and 14 laboratories (of which 13 deal with animal health and three with plant health).

A. Coordination at national level

5. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Autonomous Agricultural Health Service (SASA) have held joint meetings with a view to making an assessment, in the light of analytical findings, of the implementation in Venezuela of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement).

6. The necessary contacts were also established with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) pursuant to the latter's guidelines for the provision of financial support to enable Venezuelan officials to attend the twenty-eighth meeting of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

B. Identification

B.1 Considerations expressed in the proposal to implement the special and differential treatment provisions.

B.2 Technical assistance and cooperation.

B.3 Selection criteria: SASA requirements for purposes of compliance with provisions adopted on both issues, increasing the institution's responsiveness, staff training and resource procurement, leading to an improvement in the country's agricultural health standards.

B.4 Technical assistance requirements:

- Training for officials in WTO rules and in technical matters (competent international organizations);
- financial resources for the establishment of new health programmes and continuation of existing ones and funding to enable officials to attend meetings of international bodies, as well as for staffing and infrastructure.

C. Implementation

C.1 Implementation of health programmes in Venezuela:

Animal Health

- National Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) Eradication Programme;
- National Programme for the Control and Eradication of Animal Brucellosis;
- National Programme for the Control and Eradication of Animal Tuberculosis;
- National Classical Swine Fever Eradication Programme;
- National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Bovine Paralytic Rabies (BPR);
- National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis (VEE);
- National Equine Infectious Anaemia (EIA) Control Programme;
- Information and Monitoring Project for the Detection of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

Plant Health

- Phytosanitary Programme for the Prevention and Control of the Pink Hibiscus Mealy Bug;
- Phytosanitary Programme for the Prevention and Control of the Coffee Berry Borer;
- Phytosanitary Programme for the Prevention and Control of the Pineapple Fruit Fly (*Melanoloma viatrix* Hendel);
- Periodic Inspection Programme for National Nurseries;
- Phytosanitary Programme for Fruit Fly Prevention and Control;
- Phytosanitary Programme for the Prevention and Control of Black Sigatoka and Moko;

- Phytosanitary Programme for the Prevention and Control of Frosty Pod Rot (*Moniliophthora roreri*) in Cacao Crops;
- Periodic Inspection Programme in Aragua State for the Control of Mango Galls (*Fusarium decemcellulare* Brick);
- Periodic Phytosanitary Inspection Programme for Rodent Pests;
- Periodic Phytosanitary Inspection Programme for Stored Grains, Plant Products and By-Products;
- Periodic Phytosanitary Inspection Programme for the Destruction of Ratoon Cotton;
- Phytosanitary Programme for the Prevention and Control of *Diaphorina citri*;
- Phytosanitary Programme for the Prevention and Management of the Potato Yellow Vein Virus (PYVV).

C.2 Focus on economically significant health issues currently affecting national territory:

Animal Health:

- Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD);
- Classical Swine Fever;
- Equine Encephalitis.

Plant Health:

- Pink Hibiscus Mealy Bug;
- Fruit Fly;
- Coffee Berry Borer;
- Frosty Pod Rot in cacao crops;
- Pests in stored grains.

C.3 Transparency:

The SASA has submitted a first set of notifications to the WTO Secretariat and is currently analysing and developing the new national regulations likely to be subject to notification.

C.4 Problems faced by Venezuela with regard to the effective implementation of the SPS Agreement:

The SASA currently faces a severe budget crisis which is causing the health services which it provides (e.g. risk analysis, implementation and execution of phytosanitary

and zoosanitary programmes, development of adequate infrastructure, securing new technology, recruitment and training of specialized technical personnel, *inter alia*) to lose momentum.

D. Sustainability

7. The SASA will continue to work in conjunction with the IICA, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (APHIS-USDA), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and other competent international organizations in the field, with a view to optimizing Venezuelan agricultural health services. Such work will involve discussing regulations and the problems facing the country, strengthening existing programmes and incorporating new ones, implementing health programmes to prevent, control and eradicate plant pests and animal diseases (including in the area of exports), participation in subregional programmes and collaboration with third countries.
