

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPS AGREEMENT

Information for the Workshop on 31 March 2006

Communication from Haiti

The following communication, received on 30 March 2006, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Haiti.

1. In preparation for the workshop on the implementation of the SPS Agreement, Members were asked to submit information on their experiences with respect to the issues to be discussed.

Setting up the SPS Committee

2. The first step was to appoint an enquiry point and a notification point. In view of the functions of the various Ministries, the following was decided:

- Enquiry point: Animal & Plant Quarantine Department
Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural
Development.
- Notification point: Quality Control Department
Ministry of Trade and Industry

Election of SPS Committee Members

3. The two departments mentioned above have pooled their resources, with help from the Customs Department (Ministry of the Economy and Finance) and with the technical and administrative support of the IICA, they have held various meetings with the private sector, with importers and exporters in particular.

4. After several briefings and motivational meetings, it was agreed to go ahead with the election of the SPS Committee. The results of this simple majority election were the following:

- Chair of the SPS Committee: a member from the private sector;
- Executive secretary: the person in charge of the enquiry point; and
- Assistant executive secretary: the person in charge of the notification point.

5. In carrying out his/her functions, which are clearly defined, the Chair of the Committee will be assisted by four other members from the private sector. Technical support will have to be provided for the secretariat by the Ministry of Public Health and Population, and the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Collectivities.

Delays in operation

6. Once formed, the SPS Commission prepared and presented to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Trade and Industry a draft Decree-Law. The draft has not yet been considered because it was classified as non-urgent. It is to be hoped that the draft will fare better when a new parliament convenes in a few weeks.

7. Since the Committee's operational budget is part of the Decree-Law, it has unfortunately not been approved.

8. The two Ministries most closely involved are currently looking for the best way to make the Committee operational.

Needs

9. In order to operate, the Committee should have certain facilities:

- Office space;
- computer and communications equipment;
- office equipment;
- back-up staff; and
- training for technical staff (training material).

Constraints

10. As well as the absence of a budget, which restricts the SPS Committee's activities, the lack of interest shown by certain areas of the public sector is a major problem. Moreover, the private sector is in no great hurry to give the Committee full backing. It would seem that information on the subject is not sufficiently persuasive.

Prospects

11. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Trade and Industry are both ready to give their support to the SPS Committee.

12. The IICA has promised expert advice for the operation of the Committee. Members of the private sector are now approaching the Committee so as to be able to exploit the opportunities that the market for new products (fruit and vegetables) is currently offering.
