

**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE (ITC)
AT THE MEETING OF THE SPS COMMITTEE ON 11-12 OCTOBER 2006**

The following communication, dated 1 November 2006, is being circulated at the request of the ITC.

1. Improving Indonesia's fishery inspection capabilities – ITC Project implementation

1. The European Commission and the ITC, under the Asia Trust Fund, are sponsoring a one-year project to help strengthen the inspection and auditing services in Indonesia for fishery exports, to improve the quality and safety of the fish processing facilities listed as approved establishments for export to the European Communities. This will enable the Indonesian Competent Authority to conduct a fast review of the approved list of vessels and establishments. The project will contribute to addressing the urgent deficiencies highlighted by the European Commission FVO mission regarding fish exports to the European Communities. The project was launched in July during the first mission of the international project team leader. The current system of inspection at central and provincial levels in Indonesia was reviewed. The review analyzed the training needs required to upgrade the skills of the inspectors in using this system to approve fishery facilities to export to the EC market. It also provided a framework for a training programme to be designed and delivered by the project team during project implementation.

2. Helping Malaysia meet EC fishery requirements – ITC Project implementation

2. The European Commission and the ITC, under the Asia Trust Fund, are sponsoring a one-year project with the objective to improve the effectiveness of inspection and auditing services in Malaysia for fishery exports and the quality and safety of fish supplies to meet the requirements of import markets. The project will contribute to addressing the urgent deficiencies highlighted by the European Commission FVO mission regarding fish exports to the European Communities. An ITC mission is planned in late November to launch the project. The mission will assess the training needs of the Malaysian Competent Authorities and industry personnel with regard to trade-related policies and requirements for the export of fish and fishery products to the European Communities. Visits to the Competent Authorities' offices and several fish-related facilities will be conducted. The project training programme will be designed based on the outcome of this first mission.

3. Technical Support for Improving the Standardization, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology (SQAM) infrastructure in Malawi - ITC Project implementation

3. ITC in collaboration with the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) is implementing a Technical Support Project for improving the Standardization, Quality Assurance, Accreditation & Metrology (SQAM) infrastructure in Malawi. The two-year project is funded under the Integrated Framework. The overall and long-term objective of the project is to build national capacity in the field of SQAM both at the enterprise level, through the enhancement of the awareness of Malawi enterprises on the importance of standardization issues, and at the institutional level.

4. One of the components of the project is to provide support to the local enterprises for establishing and implementing Food Safety Management Systems (HACCP) in accordance with the Codex Standard. MBS selected 12 enterprises in Malawi for training and consultancy support for implementing HACCP based food safety management systems.

4. Joint ITC/ ISO tool: ISO 22000 - Are you ready?

5. There are more than 20 different schemes worldwide for auditing suppliers in the food sector; this plethora of schemes poses a challenge to developing countries, especially least developed countries, since agriculture plays a prominent role in their economy and exports. The recently published international standard ISO 22000:2005, Food safety management systems - Requirements for any organization in the food chain, provides one solution as it harmonizes the requirements for food safety management systems. It is becoming more accepted internationally, with over 35 countries having adopted it as a national standard following its publication in September 2005. All types of organization within the food supply chain, including feed producers - primary producers, food manufacturers, transport and storage operators and food service outlets - can use it to ensure that there is no weak link in the food supply chain.

6. ISO 22000 incorporates the requirements of the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) system developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. HACCP has increasingly become a mandatory requirement in the markets of various countries since the 1990s, most notably for non-farm food businesses in the European Communities since January 2006. As ISO 22000 is an auditable standard, certified companies can demonstrate their compliance to HACCP. Certification to ISO 22000 could facilitate acceptance by global food retailers, as it also covers the requirements of key standards developed by various global food retailer systems.

7. ITC and ISO have been collaborating to develop a software-based checklist on ISO 22000, that will help, inter alia, small businesses, especially in developing countries and transition economies, operating in the food chain to understand the regulatory requirements for food safety and their readiness for a food safety management system. It will be of benefit to enterprises in their effort to improve their market share of food and agricultural products in the global market. This tool consists of questions covering various aspects of the setting-up, implementation and certification of a food safety management system according to ISO 22000:2005, Food safety management systems - Requirements for any organization in the food chain.

8. The tool will be available on CD-ROM as well as in hard copy later this month.

5. Follow-up of the Workshop on "Influencing and Meeting International Standards: Challenges for developing countries"

9. An interactive workshop on "Influencing and Meeting International Standards: Challenges for developing countries", was organized by ITC jointly with the Commonwealth Secretariat, in June 2005 in Geneva. The publication with the same name was used as background material for the workshop. The workshop reviewed the recommendations for technical assistance contained in the joint ComSec/ITC publication (especially that on "Mentoring and Twinning Arrangement"). The final report of the workshop is available with ITC and has been distributed to the workshop's participants. ITC is now developing proposals for providing assistance to developing countries to influence as well as meet SPS measures, including those imposed by the private sector, taking into account assistance being provided in this area to avoid duplication and the deliberations and recommendations of the workshop.

6. Review of national SPS infrastructures and workshops on the SPS Agreement

10. A review was carried out of the national SPS infrastructures in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in July 2006 under projects, financed by the Government of Switzerland, for trade promotion in these countries and road maps are being prepared for their improvement. Workshops on "The WTO SPS Agreement: A Business Perspective" will be conducted in these countries in November 2006.

11. A review of the national SPS infrastructure was conducted in September 2006 in Bangladesh under the project on "Bangladesh Quality Support Programme" financed by the European Communities. A road map is being prepared for its improvement.
