

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

PROGRAMME FOR WORKSHOP ON TRANSPARENCY

Note by the Secretariat¹

1. The Secretariat of the World Trade Organization is organizing a special workshop on the transparency provisions of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, on Monday, 15 October 2007 and in the morning on Tuesday, 16 October 2007. The workshop will be followed by informal and formal meetings of the SPS Committee, lasting until Friday, 19 October. Representatives of Members, Observers and Observer Organizations are all invited to participate in the transparency workshop as well as the subsequent meetings of the Committee.
2. The purpose of the workshop is to enhance the implementation of transparency obligations and to identify best practices for drawing benefits from a transparent system. Given the focus of this workshop, the Secretariat encourages in particular the participation of officials from Members' SPS Enquiry Points and National Notification Authorities as well as other relevant SPS officials.
3. As a preparatory step for the workshop, the Secretariat circulated a Questionnaire on the Operation of SPS Enquiry Points and National Notification Authorities in December 2006 (G/SPS/W/103/Rev.2) and issued an Analysis of the 58 replies to the Questionnaire in June 2006 (G/SPS/GEN/751/Rev.1). The individual replies which have been submitted electronically, including those that have arrived after the preparation of the Analysis, are available on the WTO Members' website (under WTO resources).
4. The workshop programme (attached) was prepared in light of the discussions and inputs in the context of the Second Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement, the transparency agenda item of the Committee, the results of the above-mentioned Questionnaire as well as comments from Members. Following a general introduction and a demonstration of the newly-launched SPS Information Management System by the Secretariat, the participants will mainly be working in break-out sessions. The objective will be to identify concrete actions, which can be taken at the national and international level, to enhance the use and usefulness of transparency provisions.
5. One of the specific areas for discussion during the workshop and the subsequent meeting of the SPS Committee will be the Committee's Recommended Procedures for Implementing the Transparency Obligations of the SPS Agreement (G/SPS/7/Rev.2). Delegations wishing to provide any specific proposals regarding a revision of these Procedures should submit them to the WTO (email: serra.ayral@wto.org) by 10 September at the latest, to allow enough time for reflection by Members and for any relevant preparations by the Secretariat.

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 or obligations under the WTO.

6. For further enquiries on the workshop, please contact Mr. Robson Fernandes (tel: +41 22 739 6437; fax: +41 22 739-5760, e-mail: robson.fernandes@wto.org) or Ms. Serra Ayrál (tel: +41 22 739 5465; fax: +41 22 739 5760; e-mail: serra.ayral@wto.org).

WORKSHOP ON TRANSPARENCY

PROGRAMME

Monday, 15 October 2007

- 09.30 – 09.45 Opening remarks by the Chair
- 09.45 – 10.15 General introduction – WTO Secretariat
- *overview of transparency provisions in the SPS Agreement as well as of relevant Committee Decisions / Ministerial Decisions*
 - *statistical analysis of SPS notifications*
 - *indication of existing reference materials/tools*
- 10.15 – 10.45 Demonstration of the SPS Information Management System – WTO Secretariat
- 10.45 – 11.15 Coffee break
- 11.15 - 13.00 What it takes to be transparent and to benefit from a transparent system
Break-out session with four groups
- Discussion based on an indicative list of issues compiled by the Secretariat in light of Members' inputs. Topics to cover include:*
- (1) What it takes to be transparent*
- *possible notification of new or changed measures conforming to international standards*
 - *provision of HS codes in notifications*
 - *availability of full texts of proposed regulations / translations*
 - *length of comment period in notifications*
 - *provision of interval between publication and entry into force of measures*
 - *submission of Revisions / Addenda*
 - *inter-agency coordination and oversight of notification process*
 - *structure of Enquiry Points / NNAs and training/retention of its staff*
 - *securing continued funding for office overseeing notifications*
- (2) What it takes to benefit from a transparent system*
- *access to full texts/translations of proposed regulations*
 - *management and assessment of incoming notifications*
 - *circulation of notifications of interest to relevant stakeholders*
 - *public and private sector coordination and consultation*
 - *contacts with other Members*
 - *interagency coordination and oversight of comments on notifications of concern;*
 - *awareness of tools and options related to the SPS Agreement / Committee decisions / WTO Secretariat*
- 13.00 – 14.30 Lunch break
- 14.30 – 15.00 How to manage and benefit from incoming/outgoing notifications

Presentation by Ms. Antonieta Urrutia, Head of Enquiry Point / National Notification Authority, Agriculture and Livestock Service, Ministry of Agriculture, Chile

- 15.00 – 16.20 Reporting on break-out sessions by rapporteurs followed by general discussion
- 16.20 – 16.40 Coffee break
- 16.40 – 18.00 Identifying concrete actions to enhance the use and usefulness of transparency provisions
Break-out session with four groups

Possible actions could be grouped under the following headings:

- (1) What could be done at the Committee level?*
- (2) What could the Secretariat do?*
- (3) What could be done at the national level?*
- (4) What could be done at the bilateral/plurilateral level?*
- (5) What could be done at the regional level?*
- (6) What could the relevant standard-setting agencies do?*

Tuesday, 16 October 2007

- 10.00 - 11.00 Reporting on break-out sessions by rapporteurs
- 11.00 – 13.00 General discussion and wrap up

(Two additional one-hour sessions will be organized during the course of the week of 15 October for demonstrating the SPS Information Management System.)
