

**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**PROGRAMME FOR A WORKSHOP ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
THE SPS COMMITTEE AND THE INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD-SETTING ORGANIZATIONS**

Note by the Secretariat<sup>1</sup>

1. One of the issues identified for further consideration by the SPS Committee during the Second Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement was the relationship between the SPS Committee and the three international standard-setting organizations referenced in the SPS Agreement (G/SPS/36, paragraphs 89-91). At the June 2008 meeting of the SPS Committee, Japan submitted a proposal (G/SPS/W/226) for a special workshop to focus on the procedures and issues before the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), the FAO International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) ("three sisters"). New Zealand also proposed some specific issues which could be addressed on the relationship between the Committee and the three Sisters (G/SPS/W/206). The Committee endorsed those proposals, and asked the Secretariat to organize a special workshop on the relationship between the SPS Committee and the three sisters. This special workshop will be held on 26 October 2009.
2. The attached workshop programme is based on the suggestions from Japan and New Zealand, consultations with Codex, IPPC and OIE, and comments from various Members.
3. The workshop will begin with information on the process and procedures used in the development and adoption of international standards, guidelines and recommendations of relevance to the SPS Agreement. Delegates to the SPS Committee will have the opportunity to discuss how to improve coordination of the work between the three sisters and the Committee to enhance effectiveness and avoid duplication.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

**WORKSHOP ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPS COMMITTEE  
AND THE CODEX, IPPC AND OIE**

**26 October 2009**

**PROGRAMME**

- 10.00 – 10.15            Opening remarks by the Chair
- 10.15 – 10.30            General introduction – WTO Secretariat  
Highlight questions to be addressed:
- (a)    Relevant role of the SPS Committee *vis-à-vis* Codex, IPPC, and OIE ("three sisters")
  - (b)    Potential areas of duplication and opportunities for collaboration
  - (c)    SPS Committee's process to invite three sisters to address concerns
  - (d)    Evaluation of the actions taken by three sisters to resolve issues forwarded by the SPS Committee
  - (e)    Communication and reporting by the three sisters to their members and governing bodies on relevant issues discussed at the SPS Committee
  - (f)    Consistency in interpretation of the SPS Agreement across the three sisters
  - (g)    Monitoring of work carried out by other relevant international bodies, including status of guidelines of other international standard-setting bodies
  - (h)    Equivalence, non-use of standards, absence of standards, or inappropriate standards and their prioritization within the Committee
- 10.30 – 11.00            FAO International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
- (a)    Background on standard-setting and collaboration with the SPS Committee - how to enhance coordination
  - (b)    The standard-setting process: role of science; participation of Members, in particular developing countries; decision-making process; duration, etc.
  - (c)    Monitoring the use of standards: how is it done; where and how to effectively address concerns related to non-implementation; collaboration with the SPS Committee; difficulties with implementation; new developments requiring review of standards, etc.
  - (d)    Recent/systemic improvements in standard-setting
  - (e)    Emerging/challenging issues: private standards; climate change; regionalization; equivalence; pest/commodity specific standards, etc.

- 11.00 – 11.20 Questions and answers
- 11.20 – 11.50 World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)
- (a) Background on standard-setting and collaboration with the SPS Committee - how to enhance coordination
  - (b) The standard-setting process: role of science; participation of Members, in particular developing countries; decision-making process; duration, etc.
  - (c) Monitoring the use of standards: how is it done; where and how to effectively address concerns related to non-implementation; collaboration with the SPS Committee; difficulties with implementation; new developments requiring review of standards, etc.
  - (d) Recent/systemic improvements in standard-setting
  - (e) Emerging/challenging issues: private standards; climate change; regionalization; equivalence; commodity based standards, etc.
- 11.50 – 12.10 Questions and answers
- 12.10 – 12.40 FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex)
- (a) Background on standard-setting and collaboration with the SPS Committee - how to enhance coordination
  - (b) The standard-setting process: role of science; participation of Members, in particular developing countries; decision-making process; duration, etc.
  - (c) Monitoring the use of standards: how is it done; where and how to effectively address concerns related to non-implementation; collaboration with the SPS Committee; difficulties with implementation; new developments requiring review of standards, etc.
  - (d) Recent/systemic improvements in standard-setting
  - (e) Emerging/challenging issues: private standards; food safety vs. quality; equivalence, etc.
- 12.40 – 13.00 Questions and answers
- 13.00 – 15.00 Lunch break
- 15.00 – 17.45 Identifying concrete actions to:
- (i) Enhance the coordination between the Committee and three sisters, and between the three sisters;
  - (ii) Increase the use and usefulness of international standards;
  - (iii) Avoid unnecessary duplication of effort; and

- (iv) Ensure that the standard setting process is in line with the implementation of the SPS Agreement, and facilitates trade in agriculture and food products.

Discussions could be grouped under the following headings:

15.00 – 15.45 How to effectively encourage the use of international standards, guidelines or recommendations by all Members

- (a) How can the SPS Committee effectively identify relevant issues linked to non-use of standards, absence of standards, or inappropriate standards, and appropriately prioritize these issues?

15.45 – 16.45 How to ensure effective collaboration and communication between the SPS Committee and the three sisters, and among the three sisters

- (a) Reporting/communication from the three sisters to the SPS Committee

*Is reporting back to the Committee by the three sisters: (i) effective; (ii) up to Members expectations; and (iii) a tool for harmonization?*

*Does the Committee have a role in assessing the actions taken by the three sisters to resolve a specific issue?*

- (b) Communication from the SPS Committee to the three sisters

*Is the process used by the Committee to invite the three sisters to address concerns clear and efficient? To what extent can or should the Committee: (i) give guidance towards an outcome; and/or (ii) provide information, guidance or background to the issue?*

*What are the most effective mechanisms for the Committee to communicate to the three sisters the importance and priority placed on identified issues?*

- (c) Joint action for the prevention/resolution of problems

16.45 – 17.45 What is the role of the SPS Committee in broader issues common to more than one (or all) of the three sisters? Is it to ensure consistency in interpretation of the SPS Agreement across the three sisters?

17.45 – 18.00 Closing remarks by the Chair

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