

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10-11 NOVEMBER 1999

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the "Committee") held its sixteenth meeting on 10-11 November 1999, under the chairmanship of Mr. Attie Swart (South Africa). The agenda proposed in WTO/AIR/1211 was adopted with amendments.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT

(a) Information from Members

(i) *Chile – Progress in the implementation of the Agreement*

2. The representative of Chile expressed appreciation to Japan and the Philippines for recognizing Chile as a country free of fruit fly. He also thanked Argentina for having recognized Chile as a country free of Classic Swine Fever and expressed again the hope that the European Communities and the United States would accelerate the recognition process. Since the last meeting of the Committee, Chile had concluded a bilateral agreement with New Zealand on cooperation and coordination in SPS matters. He noted that Chile was an active participant in the relevant international organizations, and held Vice-Chairmanships in the IPPC and the Codex Commission as well as the Vice-Chairmanship of the OIE Commission for the Americas.

3. The representative of the European Communities confirmed that the EC had recently received complementary information with regard to the Classic Swine Fever situation in Chile. Bilateral discussions with Chile continued and an EC inspection mission would visit Chilean control systems at the beginning of 2000.

4. The Chairman encouraged other Members to follow Chile's example and provide information to the Committee on measures taken regarding the implementation of the Agreement.

(ii) *Follow-up to issues previously raised*

5. The Chairman informed the Committee that the Czech Republic had recently notified the lifting, with effect from 1 October 1999, of the measure which had restricted imports of poultry meat from Thailand. Noting that no other follow-up issues had been raised, the Chairman recalled that this item had been included in the agenda upon the request of several Members. He encouraged all Members to make use of it and report on developments related to issues raised in previous Committee meetings.

(b) Specific trade concerns

(i) *European Communities – Measures affecting imports of Brazilian gelatin (G/SPS/GEN/133)*

6. The representative of Brazil indicated that her authorities and the European Communities had decided to pursue this issue bilaterally. A first informal meeting would take place shortly and she expected to have good news to report soon. The European Communities confirmed this information.

7. The representative of the United States welcomed the inclusion of the notion of equivalency in the EC gelatin rule and indicated that the United States was looking forward to discussions with the European Communities to specifically address concerns raised previously, including those concerning inspection.

(ii) *South Africa - Recognition of the concept of pest- or disease-free areas as an international standard, guideline or recommendation (G/SPS/GEN/139)*

8. The representative of South Africa introduced his document and requested the Committee to express an opinion on the status of a decision by an international organization to officially recognize freedom from disease of a country that is also a WTO Member.

9. The representative of Thailand stressed the importance of this issue and supported the South African request.

10. The representative of Chile, supported by the representative of Argentina, noted that for a country to be recognized as free from a specific disease, significant time and investment was required. It was of particular importance for developing countries having achieved such a status that this be recognized in their trade relations. The long delays often imposed by importing countries were difficult to understand. He supported the South African request, but wondered how the surveillance system operated in a country with self-declared freedom of a specific disease. Would such a country supply all the information required by an importing country? Did the OIE have any verification capacity? Similar questions could arise in the context of the IPPC. He also noted that the rules, as such, should not be confused with their implementation. The OIE provided an important basis, but ultimately the decision remained with the importing country. In making this decision, it was necessary, however, that countries complied with the provisions of the SPS Agreement. For instance, in the case of classic swine fever, infected animals had to be slaughtered. According to the OIE, after six months without outbreaks the country could be declared and recognized free of this disease. However, some major OIE member countries had their own regulations and required a period of 12 months.

11. The representative of Australia raised the issue whether or not regionalization recognition from the OIE was an international standard. In the affirmative, any Member which believed that the level of protection that it provided was not appropriate to the situation would have the option to adopt a higher and scientifically-based level of protection, i.e. not recognizing regionalization.

12. The representative of Mexico expressed his delegation's interest in the subject and indicated he needed more time to study the document tabled by South Africa.

13. The representative of the OIE recalled that the OIE procedure of recognition of disease-free areas had its origin in the GATT Group of Negotiations on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Regulations and Barriers which, in 1990, had requested the OIE to undertake work on risk assessment relating, in particular, to Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD). The OIE Code Chapter on FMD had been revised in parallel with the development of general directives on risk assessment. The FMD Chapter provided that OIE members may be classified in one of the country categories recognized free of FMD. Countries needed to follow a specific procedure in order to have their entire territory or parts of it

recognized free of disease. This procedure was voluntary in nature. First of all, a country needed to make a request to the OIE Director-General, accompanied by a detailed report following a model established by the FMD Commission or other epizootic commissions. These Commissions had groups of experts of different origins who, after having reviewed the case, could endorse the country's request or seek further information. The Commissions could also suggest that a group of experts visit the country or reject the request. Once the Commission had reviewed the entire file, and the list of countries potentially in position to be recognized in full or in part, as free of the disease, its decision was transmitted through the Director-General of the OIE to all member countries. The member countries had a 60-day period of time during which to evaluate the information provided, ask for further information from the requesting country, and also make known any objections. The epizootic Commission would then examine the objections and decide whether they were admissible. The Commission would then propose a definitive list of countries or zones which may be declared disease-free was submitted for adoption by the annual General Session of the International Committee of the OIE. The resolution as adopted was published in the OIE bulletin and on the OIE website. Continuing recognition of such status was conditional on the permanent respect of OIE rules regarding the declaration of animal diseases and on an annual certification that this status and the elements underlying the recognition were still maintained. The OIE resolution was circulated to member countries, which proceeded with their risk assessments and considered whether they could or could not import live animals or animal products from other countries. This procedure presently applied only to FMD, Rinderpest and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) and possibly to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in the near future.

14. The representative of Canada noted that the OIE procedure was quite unique. In Canada the OIE evaluations were considered as useful, but Canada did not give up the right to conduct its own additional assessment. The additional requirements could differ from one country to another. He stressed that if the majority of the member countries of the OIE gave more weight to the OIE evaluations, Canada would be prepared to discuss that in the OIE. However, currently a positive OIE report did not remove the right of importing countries to carry out their own additional assessment.

15. The representative of the United States indicated concerns regarding the suggestion that the SPS Committee should express an opinion on the status of decisions of other international organizations. He noted that the OIE determination on disease-free declarations was very helpful information, but it did not replace the right of governments to make their own determinations about importing animals or animal products. He drew Members' attention to Article 6.3 of the SPS Agreement, according to which exporting Members claiming that areas within their territories were pest- or disease-free should objectively demonstrate to the importing Member that such areas were free. Irrespective of the very useful discussion in the OIE, OIE determination did not replace the right of importing Members to be assured of a disease-free area. What the OIE and its group of experts did was verifying to the best of their ability that the member country had conducted the activities identified by the OIE as requirements for achieving freedom of disease. When the issue was brought for a vote to the International Committee meeting, country members voting "yes" meant to say that they had no information to the contrary. However, this was not a detailed risk analysis. It was simply a verification of documents provided by the requesting country that did not replace risk assessment. He suggested that countries having gone through the OIE process should provide the dossier, in addition to the OIE report, to importing countries even before such information was requested. The OIE process may include one site visit by the team experts before granting the recognition. Thereafter the maintenance of that status depended on the ability of the country to continue its surveillance, import regulations and others. There was no periodic monitoring to make sure that the status was maintained. In the OIE discussions there was a concern that on the one hand the OIE wanted to assist in providing the information, but on the other hand this was not an official recognition for which the OIE should be held liable.

16. The representative of the European Communities recalled that in the context of the review of the SPS Agreement, the European Communities had tabled a paper on the adaptation to regional conditions

and equivalence which addressed some of the issues under discussions. His delegation continued to reflect on this matter and would further consider the South African proposal.

17. The representative of Argentina underlined that it seemed contradictory that a country would say "yes" in the OIE, but when called to translate that decision into a trade practice would say "I don't know". This seemed to hide a trade interest which had nothing to do with the OIE recognition and affected developing countries because of the high costs and time involved in repeating these procedures with regard to each and every market.

18. The representative of South Africa reiterated that he did not question the right of a Member to request further information. This was the way they were proceeding in their bilateral negotiations, as illustrated by the negotiations with the United States. In this case, the United States had accepted the evidence provided by South Africa on its zoning and had carried out their own examination. This was an acceptable procedure for his country. His point was that the recognition concept of regionalization, as stated in the SPS Agreement, should remain an incentive to trade.

(c) Consideration of specific notifications received

19. No questions or concerns were raised under this item.

(d) Any other matters related to the operation of transparency provision

20. The Chairman noted that the most recent list of enquiry points had been circulated as G/SPS/ENQ/9, and the latest list of National Notification Authorities as G/SPS/GEN/141.

(i) Chairman's oral report on the special meeting on the transparency provisions

21. The Chairman gave a brief report on the special meeting on the SPS Agreement Transparency provisions held on 14 November 1999 (see Secretariat report G/SPS/R/16). He noted that the special meeting would contribute to greater transparency and better use of the SPS Agreement by more Members. The presentations would be circulated as G/SPS/GEN documents.

22. The representative of the European Communities thanked the Secretariat for the organization of the special meeting and indicated that his delegation would comment on the draft Handbook on the Transparency Provisions of the SPS Agreement.

23. The representative of Mexico stressed that it was his understanding that the Handbook would be circulated as a Secretariat document and would not require the approval of the SPS Committee. This was confirmed by the Secretariat.

24. The representatives of New Zealand, Uganda, Chile and Malawi also thanked the Secretariat for its initiative. The representative of Malawi invited the Secretariat to organize an SPS workshop in his country.

(ii) New procedure for the electronic transmission of notifications

25. The Secretariat explained the new procedure for the electronic transmission of notifications, as laid down in G/SPS/GEN/136, and the monthly summary of notifications received (G/SPS/GEN/138 and G/SPS/GEN/140). The procedure was part of the follow-up of the SPS Agreement Annex B provision that states that the Secretariat should draw to the attention of developing countries notifications which may be of particular interest to them. Following informal consultations with interested delegations, the Secretariat decided that the most practical and effective procedure would be to ensure that the notifications be received as quickly as possible by notification

authorities and enquiry points. The Secretariat decided to circulate a summary of the notifications on a monthly basis so that developing countries, in particular, could very quickly identify which of those notifications could be of interest to them and the deadline for comments. The electronic transmission of notifications directly to enquiry points and notification authorities that had provided their e-mail addresses would take place twice a week. Additional electronic addresses could be added to the distribution list and an information sheet was circulated on how to subscribe electronically to receive the notifications. The notifications would be distributed electronically in the original language only. Inaccuracies in some electronic addresses had already been identified. Members were requested to check the accuracy of the addresses and keep the Secretariat informed of any changes (including in fax and telephone numbers or addresses) by fax, letter or e-mail. Members were requested to be as accurate as possible in the completion of the notification formats, so that the monthly summary duly reflected their content and became a useful tool for enquiry points and notification authorities. The Secretariat recalled that the notifications and other unrestricted documents could also be found under "documents-on-line" on the WTO website (www.wto.org). Moreover, the normal hard copy distribution of notifications and other documents to delegates and local missions would continue and, if requested, an additional copy could also be sent to a single country address.

26. The representative of Mexico indicated that his country had provided the electronic address of the enquiry point and an additional address that his authorities had established for the reception of notifications. The representative of the United States suggested that updated items in the lists of enquiry points and notification authorities issued by the Secretariat be duly identified by an asterisk in order to facilitate Members' identification of the changes.

27. The Chairman stressed that in order to be effective, the new procedure required very accurate notifications, and urged Members to be as concise as possible.

(iii) Responses to the questionnaire on SPS-related websites

28. The Secretariat indicated that the information contained in documents G/SPS/W/102 and G/SPS/GEN/144 reflected the information received from 13 Members and additional information provided by the European Communities at the previous Committee meeting. The Secretariat noted abundant information available on Members' SPS websites, he stressed that it was important that currently numerous developing country Members did not have electronic access to such information. Members should therefore not refrain from providing as much information as possible to the Committee. The Secretariat intended to include the list of SPS website addresses on the WTO Homepage. Finally, Members who had not yet responded to the questionnaire were invited to do so.

29. The representative of Hong Kong, China noted that the electronic address of her territory's enquiry point and national authority, the Trade Department, had changed and that the new address would soon be notified to the Secretariat. However, the Trade Department was only a coordination department, which did not provide information in respect of SPS. For that reason its electronic address should be deleted from document G/SPS/GEN/144.

(e) SPS Agreement and developing countries (G/SPS/W/93)

30. The representative of Guatemala made a statement on the need for developing adequate SPS systems in developing countries in order to comply with the provisions of the SPS Agreement (G/SPS/GEN/157).

31. The representative of Canada praised Guatemala for the fundamental regulatory changes that had taken place in that country within a few years. He recalled that during the review of the SPS Agreement, there was a recognition that some developing countries faced a number of challenges in complying with the obligations of the Agreement. There was also recognition that technical

assistance was taking place, but that it needed perhaps to be reviewed, enhanced and re-designed. While developing countries were increasing their participation in the development of international standards more needed to be done. Egypt had circulated an interesting paper (G/SPS/GEN/128), identifying issues in the area of equivalence, special and differential treatment and transparency. The representative of Canada noted that the Committee was addressing the implementation problems faced by developing countries in a variety of ways. Despite growing impatience, discussion on consistency on the appropriate level of protection was progressing, good work on transparency was under way, and a technical assistance questionnaire had been circulated. However, he believed that a more specific agenda should be set for the next meeting of the Committee, possibly on one of the above mentioned items.

32. The representative of Chile thanked Guatemala for the information and for the recent organization, in Guatemala City, of a seminar on the implementation of the SPS Agreement for developing countries. These initiatives were extremely valuable to encourage the full participation of developing countries in the SPS Committee, in order to work together for a better understanding of the Agreement.

33. The representative of Kenya stressed the importance of Canada's approach and confirmed the necessity of a more focused way of addressing the problems faced by developing countries in the implementation of the SPS Agreement. Kenya was faced with serious problems particularly with respect to fish and horticultural exports to the European Communities. The horticulture export problems were related to a so-called excess of pesticide residue levels which could exceed the maximum residue levels established by the European Communities. This was an illustration of the need for more focused technical assistance to allow developing countries to address the real issues.

34. The representative of the United States welcomed the statement by Guatemala and noted that the need for infrastructure changes in developing countries and the difficulty to identify the appropriate infrastructure had often been raised in the Committee. The approach taken in Guatemala illustrated a very practical and pragmatic way to proceed. He noted that implementation issues were one of the most important agenda items and an ongoing issue in the Committee. He encouraged all Members to continue to provide suggestions, presentations and information on this topic.

35. The representative of India joined the praise of Guatemala for its approach and stressed that this experience could be of great value to other developing countries. He welcomed the Canadian proposal for a more focused discussion on this issue and urged Members to consider favourably proposals made by developing countries, including India, on the implementation problems raised in the preparation of the upcoming Ministerial Conference. He stressed that an early resolution of these issues would be of great help to developing countries in implementing the various agreements, including the SPS Agreement.

36. The representative of Egypt welcomed the interventions by Guatemala and Canada and recalled his country's submission with regard to the difficulties faced by developing countries (G/SPS/GEN/128 refers). He expressed his delegation's wish to have a structured discussion, addressing in detail the issues raised in Egypt's submission, as well as issues raised by other Members, including in the preparatory process for the Ministerial Conference. He added that a plan on how to further the discussion on these issues could perhaps be prepared in advance of the next Committee meeting.

37. The representative of the European Communities thanked Guatemala for the statement and requested that a copy of the new Health Law be sent to the European Communities. The representative of Mexico also welcomed the statement by Guatemala and the representative of Panama encouraged other Members to follow the example of Guatemala.

38. The representative of Canada noted that he had no difficulties in addressing implementation issues raised in the preparatory process for the Ministerial Conference. Indeed some of those issues were quite innovative. However, he believed that at least those issues already discussed in previous Committee meetings deserved to be addressed in a more focused way.

39. The Chairman invited the authors of some of the referenced documents, including Egypt and India, to help him and the Secretariat to identify issues which could be dealt with in a more focused way at the next Committee meeting.

II. MONITORING THE USE OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

40. The Chairman noted that no Members had submitted new examples for consideration. He recalled that the Committee had sent its views to the competent international standard-setting bodies on the examples brought to its attention in previous meetings.

41. The representative of Chile requested that documents G/SPS/GEN/29, G/SPS/GEN/30 and G/SPS/GEN/31, i.e. the status of international standards, guidelines and recommendations adopted by CODEX, the OIE and IPPC, respectively be updated. The Secretariat agreed to raise the issue with the international organizations.

42. The representative of Codex indicated that the list of the new standards adopted by the Codex Commission in 1999 was contained in an appendix to the report of the Commission, which was available on the Codex website and had been sent to all Codex contact points. A complete list of all Codex standards was also available on the Codex website. With regard to the question of benzoic acid which had been raised by the Philippines, she indicated that the levels for benzoic acid were under consideration in the framework of a general standard for food additives which was being considered by the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants. Moreover, there were no Codex standards for sauces, but this was also being considered under the general standard for food additives. The revised draft of the general standard for food additives would be circulated before the end of November 1999, asking for government comments before the following Codex session on food additives and contaminants. The aspects related to microbiologic contamination and levels of pathogens in raw meat and bacillus cirrus would be brought to the attention of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, which would meet soon. With regard to Tetracycline, the Committee on Veterinary Drug Residues in Foods had considered the question and the only level for Tetracycline which were submitted to the Commission for provisional adoption at Step five concerned fish and prawns. As regards the levels in pigmeat and cattle, pigs, sheep and chicken, the recommended maximum residue levels would be considered by the following session of the Committee on Veterinary Drug Residues in Food, which would meet at the end of March 2000.

43. The representative of the IPPC reported that work on a definition for the term "official control" had been undertaken by the IPPC as a result of the recommendation of the Committee. Preliminary discussions held within the work programme of the IPPC over the past year had resulted in several proposals. The Committee of Experts on Phytosanitary Measures (CEPM) had thoroughly reviewed the proposals in May 1999 and concluded that it was difficult to capture the full meaning of the term in a definition. The CEPM suggested that a more comprehensive explanation would be required. The Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM) meeting in October 1999 agreed to the establishment of an expert group tasked with developing suitable text.

44. The representative of OIE drew Members' attention to G/SPS/GEN/145 and summarized its content.

III. CONSISTENCY

45. The Chairman informed the Committee that he had continued informal consultations with Members on draft guidelines to further the practical implementation of Article 5.5. Subsequent to the July meeting, he had met informally with a number of interested delegations, and had invited other interested Members to contact him. Further informal consultations had been held on 9 November on the basis of his proposal for "bridging" language, circulated to Members in October, to make the link between decisions on the appropriate level of protection and SPS measures.

46. The representative of Canada suggested that in the second line of the bridging text the words "the need for determination was implicit" be replaced by "although there is an implicit obligation to do so".

47. The representative of the United States said that his delegation would like to reflect further on the bridging text. He added that the third sentence of the text "in such cases the appropriate level of protection may be deduced from the measures in place" might sometimes lead to a false conclusion. The last sentence also needed to be re-worked because it left open a real need to develop further guidelines. The point that should be captured was that the list of guidelines with respect to measures was not exhaustive and to suggest additional guidelines at this point might not be a good idea. He stressed that all comments to the 15 June 1999 text, including those expressed during the informal consultations and at the present meeting, should be taken into account in a new text to be circulated before the next meeting.

48. The representative of the European Communities said that his delegation would also need some time to reflect on the bridging text and supported the United States suggestion regarding the follow-up process. The representative of India requested that his delegation's comments during the informal consultations be taken into consideration in the redraft of the guidelines.

49. The representative of Guatemala suggested that, taking into consideration Members' right to establish their appropriate level of protection, as well as requirements for transparency and trade without discrimination, the Committee should establish a list of Members' total production values. Such a list would facilitate the assessment of the economic impact of the risk of the entry of pests or diseases in a territory. He announced his country's intention to follow up on this issue in the near future.

50. The representative of New Zealand noted that Article 5.5 was about "guidelines to further the practical implementation of this provision" and not guidelines about levels of protection or SPS measures as such. The guidelines should be seen as an integral whole. He supported the US follow-up approach and encouraged Members to not jeopardize the work already achieved

51. It was agreed that the Secretariat would revise the draft text in cooperation with the Chairman and circulate it to all Members in advance of the next Committee meeting.

IV. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION

52. The Secretariat noted that replies to the questionnaire on technical assistance (G/SPS/W/101) had been summarized in document G/SPS/GEN/143. Fifteen Members had responded to the questionnaire and other Members were encouraged to reply. Document G/SPS/GEN/143 would be revised as necessary. Taking into account the amount of useful information lost in a summary document, the Secretariat was considering circulating the individual countries' replies to the questionnaire.

53. The Secretariat reported on regional seminars, assistance to Members and acceding countries, and participation in workshops organized by other organizations. The Secretariat had participated in a regional workshop on "Future Strategies for Food Safety" organized by the World Bank, EMBRAPA and IICA, held in Costa Rica. The Secretariat had also participated, as rapporteur, in the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East in a session on "The Impact of the SPS Agreement on Animal Trade and Trade in Animal Products in the Middle East Region". The Secretariat had participated in national seminars in the Philippines, Mongolia and Thailand. In the framework of the FAO Melbourne Conference, the Secretariat had participated in a workshop on Food Safety and Food Quality. The Secretariat had also provided technical assistance to Moldova in its process of accession to the WTO. Finally, the WTO had co-sponsored the participation of a number of developing countries' representatives to a workshop on risk analysis in animal health, held in Thailand. Unfortunately, the Secretariat had to postpone a SPS seminar for African French-speaking countries, but expected to hold the seminar in the second quarter of 2000. The Secretariat's technical assistance programme for the immediate future was already heavily charged and included national seminars in Bahrain, Jordan and Macedonia. In the medium to longer term, the Secretariat was scheduling technical assistance to Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Thailand, Estonia and Belarus.

54. The Secretariat noted that technical assistance and cooperation efforts had made significant contributions to increasing the understanding of the SPS Agreement. However, efforts in this regard should be pursued, in particular in the least developed countries to which the Agreement would fully apply as of 1 January 2000. There was also a need for increased technical assistance involving scientific and technical expertise. Although there was growing activity in this regard, much remained to be done, particularly in areas such as risk assessment, equivalence and regulatory reform, as well as in the critical area of domestic coordination and communication between the different national services and agencies responsible for the implementation of the Agreement. Technical assistance and cooperation needed also to be enhanced with respect to new approaches to food safety, animal health or plant protection, including HACCP, "farm to table", etc. A maximum involvement of the private sector in all these activities was necessary, including industry and consumer representatives. The Secretariat noted that developing country Members continued to demand increased and improved involvement in the work of international organizations and Members should continue efforts to find practical solutions to deal with this issue in the different international fora. Finally, underscoring the importance of ongoing efforts by the Secretariat, Members and international organizations, the Secretariat stressed the need for follow-up initiatives. Developing country Members were encouraged to initiate, whenever possible, the necessary implementation actions following particular technical assistance and cooperation initiatives.

55. The representative of the United States recalled that his delegation regularly reported on his country's technical assistance activities at the Committee meetings and added that it would submit additional information for inclusion in future revisions of G/SPS/GEN/143. He recalled that the United States had hosted an important meeting for 17 sub-Saharan countries in May 1999 in which very useful discussions had been held regarding technical assistance and cooperation needs. The United States was at present building on that discussion. Since the last Committee meeting, the United States had been involved in at least three different training activities in South Africa with participation of nearby countries. These activities dealt with the SPS Agreement obligations, sharing implementation experiences and identifying ways to cooperate to further the progress of implementation. One activity had dealt with the technical aspects of implementation of HACCP techniques on seafood. Focused discussions on technical assistance with the South African authorities would continue.

56. The representative of Thailand thanked the Secretariat for the compilation of the information on technical assistance and in particular for its participation in and contribution to a seminar held in Thailand on the impact of the SPS Agreement on the Thai food industry. He stressed the importance

of technical assistance in light of Article 9 of the SPS Agreement and observed that G/SPS/GEN/143 could become even more useful if it included an impact assessment of the assistance provided.

57. The representative of Chile agreed with previous speakers' comments and noted that developing countries needed to play a more active role in technical assistance. There were differences between countries' needs and it was necessary to assess the domestic situation before requesting technical assistance. A technical assistance programme, including follow-up actions and evaluation, should then be prepared. There were often national experts who knew the Agreement but who did not share their knowledge with others. Regional coordination and bilateral cooperation agreements could also be useful tools for a structured continuity. He informed the Committee of a number of bilateral technical assistance activities dealing with border control systems, involving the United States (APHIS), and Canada (AgriFood), as well as Argentina and New Zealand. Furthermore, the United States had organized a food hygiene seminar in Santiago de Chile for South American countries. A separate seminar on trade and food safety, organized by FAO and OIRSA, had also been held in Santiago de Chile.

58. The representative of Guatemala noted that the high mobility of civil servants in developing countries created significant difficulties. It was necessary to involve producers and exporters in training activities and show them that an adequate implementation of SPS measures was an important market access instrument. Guatemala had organized a successful seminar in cooperation with Chile on this theme.

59. The representative of Malawi noted that his country had participated in a number of technical assistance seminars, including the one organized in the United States. It was also the first time that Malawi attended an SPS Committee meeting. With regard to his country's specific technical assistance requirements (and indeed, he believed those of most African countries), he stressed food safety management and quality control, in particular HACCP. Eradication and control of pests and diseases in plants and animals, including quarantine procedures, were areas where technical assistance was also required in order to help ensuring that export commodities could meet international requirements. He agreed that human resources were a serious problem in African countries, as noted by the Secretariat, because some time after having received SPS Agreement-related specific training, officials were frequently assigned other tasks. This was the case, for instance, with transparency procedures. Malawi was just establishing the enquiry point and national notification authority, and it would not be surprising if once the service was established the official in charge moved to other duties. This underlined the need for continued training in these areas. However, once the service was on its way, technical assistance would have to concentrate on the acquisition and use of information technologies, including the use of Internet facilities.

60. The Chairman stressed the importance of ongoing activities and the important role of initiatives such as the transparency meeting and the handbook. He invited developing country Members to send their requests for technical assistance to the Secretariat and confirmed that G/SPS/GEN/143 would be regularly updated. All Members were invited to submit information on their technical assistance activities by the end of February 2000 for inclusion in a revised document to be circulated for the March meeting.

61. The representative of the European Communities thanked the Secretariat for the circulation of information on Member's technical assistance. He noted that in view of the wide variety of technical assistance and cooperation provided by the European Communities in many different areas, it was not always easy to find the appropriate information to submit to the Committee. The information submitted by the European Communities was only partial and efforts to provide additional information would continue.

62. The representative of OIE summarized OIE technical assistance activities since the last meeting of the Committee. An OIE Seminar on risk analysis and animal health, had been organized with the support of Slovakia and Switzerland in Nitra, Slovakia, on 22 and 23 July 1999. Dr. Ozawa, OIE Representative for Asia and the Pacific, had attended the OIE/APHCA (Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific) Regional Seminar on animal disease risk analysis which was held in Kochi (India) from 7 to 9 September 1999. The seminar had been attended by 22 officials from 16 countries and 15 observers. A training session on epidemiological surveillance tools and methods had been organized by CIRAD-EMVT (Department of Livestock and Veterinary Medicine of the International Cooperation Center for Agronomic Research and Development, France) for epidemiologists from African countries in Montpellier (France), from 13 to 16 September 1999. During this training session, Dr A.S. Sidibé, Honorary President of the OIE International Committee, had presented a paper on the importance of epidemiological surveillance networks for African countries in connection with OIE standards and the WTO. The OIE Regional Representation for the Americas, in conjunction with the OIE Collaborating Center for Animal Disease Surveillance Systems and Risk Analysis, had established a joint working programme aimed at achieving an harmonized interpretation of the provisions of the *International Animal Health Code* within the countries of the Americas. The joint working programme was to identify training requirements in risk analysis in these countries and seek the necessary funding. The results of this work would be submitted to the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas at its next conference. Finally, an international conference on risk analysis in aquatic animal health would be held at the OIE Headquarters in Paris from 8 to 10 February 2000.

63. The representative of the IPPC informed the Committee of a risk analysis workshop held in Quito, Ecuador, in August 1999. The workshop was sponsored and organized by the USDA with the assistance of the IPPC Secretariat. The representative of the IPPC also reported on an initiative undertaken by the Chairperson of the ICPM, with assistance from New Zealand, to develop means for developing countries to evaluate their phytosanitary capabilities and identify their weaknesses. The objective of this programme was to help developing countries and donors to direct technical assistance to areas of greatest need. A pilot project currently underway utilized an Internet-based survey developed by New Zealand with the assistance of six developing countries. The survey could be found on the Internet at <http://icpm.massey.ac.nz> or requested directly from the IPPC Secretariat. A working group established by the ICPM would review the results of the pilot project in February 2000 and develop recommendations on next steps for the project and the possible role of the ICPM in technical assistance. The IPPC welcomed comments from SPS Committee Members on the pilot project as well as the role of the ICPM in technical assistance.

64. The representative from Codex noted that the FAO and the International Atomic Agency (IAA) had organized a workshop on validation of methods of analysis and sponsored the participation of representatives of several developing countries. Since the last Committee meeting, there had been no other national or regional seminars or workshops. A regional workshop on risk analysis would be held in connection with the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia in Thailand at the end of November 1999. She noted that FAO had developed a training manual on the application of HACCP and on the application of Good Manufacturing Practices and the Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene. A very extensive training programme in this regard had been conducted especially in Asia and Central Europe. The most recent training activity had taken place in India in September 1999 on fish inspection. Similar activities were planned for Africa in 2000. She informed the Committee that the FAO fish department had a very extensive programme on HACCP. A manual on Risk Analysis was also in preparation. Three projects for India, Bhutan and Uruguay regarding the establishment and improvement of the work of Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees were in preparation and would take place at the beginning of 2000.

V. MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM THE WORK OF OBSERVER ORGANIZATIONS

(a) IPPC

65. The representative of the IPPC stated that the 11th Technical Consultation Among Regional Plant Protection Organizations and the second meeting of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM) had been held in early October 1999. He noted that the ICPM continued to be an "interim" commission of FAO until the amendments to the IPPC will come into force. He reported that the Interim Commission had adopted two international standards: Requirements for the Establishment of Pest Free Places of Production and Pest Free Production Sites, and the revised Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms. The ICPM had also adopted new standard-setting procedures and non-binding dispute settlement procedures. It had established numerous expert groups for further work on notification of interceptions and non-compliance; pest listing; non-manufactured wood packing materials; systems approaches for pest risk management; pest reporting; and regulated non-quarantine pests. In addition, two open-ended working groups had been created to assist developing countries to become familiar with international standards. A special exploratory working group had been established by the ICPM to clarify the role of the IPPC with respect to genetically modified organisms, biosafety, and invasive species. Other open-ended working groups had been established to work on strategic planning, technical assistance, the definition of official control, and information exchange. The ICPM recognized the tremendous benefits of e-mail and Internet capabilities for information exchange and suggested that Members give high priority to providing technical assistance to developing countries in this regard. In the light of the heavy work programme and a desire to shift away from a fall meeting cycle, the next meeting of the ICPM was scheduled for April 2001.

(b) WHO

66. The representative of WHO gave an update on the International Health Regulations (IHR) revision. WHO was fully reviewing the aims and objectives of the IHR to ensure that good public health practices become the key factor in deciding member states future obligations. WHO was in the process of seeking the greatest possible input from member states, partner organizations and stake holders, mostly through direct collaboration and consultation. He thanked the WTO for the opportunity to participate in a workshop at the time of the Seattle Ministerial meeting, where WHO intended to provide information on the IHR to a broader audience. The importance of the WTO and the SPS Committee in this endeavour could not be overstated and he encouraged the active participation of Ministries of Trade in the development of the new IHR. This linkage both at the national and the international level was critical to fostering the development of rules and processes that would prevent the international spread of human diseases as well as reduce the disruption to world traffic and economic loss caused by urgent international public health events. He added that the IHR included requirements for border controls on human health and stressed that WHO would be happy to provide information sessions on the revision of the IHR during SPS seminars if requested.

67. The representative of the European Communities noted the interest of the Committee with regard to the binding nature of the IHR and the binding nature of its dispute settlement procedures. He stressed the need to avoid any overlap between the work of WHO and the work of other organizations such as Codex and OIE. He suggested that the Secretariat, with the possible help of the WHO, prepare information on the review process of the IHR for the next Committee meeting.

(c) Codex

68. The representative of Codex gave an outline of the FAO Conference on International Food Trade, held in Melbourne on 11-15 November (G/SPS/GEN/158). The Conference aimed at providing general orientation for the work of Codex, including with regard to the establishment of

expert groups that were the basis of Codex work, risk assessment, and technical assistance to developing countries. There were also a number of recommendations to member countries aimed at improving their participation in the Codex process and, thereby also facilitating the implementation of the SPS and TBT Agreements. Apart from the FAO Conference, Codex had also prepared an information sheet on Codex and the TBT Agreement which could be found on the Codex website (<http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/economic/esn/codex/Default.htm>). She indicated that the Codex Committee on General Principles was discussing working principles for risk analysis as part of the integration of risk analysis in the Codex system. A revised version of the principles had been circulated to members for comments and would be discussed at the next session of the Committee on General Principles, to be held in Paris on 10-14 April 2000. The Codex Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food was currently under revision and would also be considered by the Codex Committee on General Principles. The Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants was developing general standards for additives and for toxins in food. The results of a March 1999 joint FAO/WHO consultation on risk assessment and microbiological hazards, as well as a Melbourne Conference recommendation for the establishment of a specific expert group to provide microbiological risk assessment, would be discussed in Washington at the next session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, in December 1999. The Codex Commission had also adopted the Principles and Guidelines for Conduct of Microbiological Risk Assessment, a text that would guide the work of the Committee on Food Hygiene. This Committee was now discussing principles and guidelines for microbiological risk management. FAO and WHO would convene an expert consultation on safety aspects of food produced through biotechnology by mid-2000, but not before the new Codex task force on safety and quality of food produced through biotechnology would meet on 14-17 March in Tokyo.

69. The representative of Chile indicated that there had been limited participation of South American countries in the FAO Melbourne Conference. He noted that the Conference set the FAO directives for the next ten years, and regretted that some countries had underestimated its importance. Several Codex committees would meet in the next few months and it was important that WTO Members attend those meetings. He enumerated a series of important items under discussion in some of the Committees and encouraged Members to at least submit their comments with regard to ongoing development of international standards.

(d) OIE

70. The representative of the OIE informed the Committee that a number of specialized commissions, working groups and ad-hoc groups had met since the last Committee meeting and were revising the OIE Code chapters dealing with various animal diseases. The Standards Commission had met and was finalizing the Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines, which should be published by the end of 2000. The Third Group of Scientific Planning of the OIE had met in September 1999 and stressed the importance of the standard-setting activities of the OIE. A significant amount of work was going on regarding risk analysis, and there was also an ad-hoc group on quality and evaluation of veterinary services. The group would produce proposals for the revision of the respective chapter of the OIE Code. Other areas of work included the revision of the concept of zoning and regionalization, which would be addressed by the Code Commission at its January 2000 meeting. The working group on Informatics and Epidemiology had produced a paper dealing with the establishment of a risk analysis unit in the national veterinary services, which would be submitted to OIE member countries shortly. The working group was also preparing a booklet on risk analysis which should be ready in 2000. The Commission for the Americas was also working on the clarification of risk analysis concepts and definitions, in cooperation with the OIE Fort Collins Collaborating Center. An International Conference on risk analysis on aquatic animal health would be held in Paris in February 2000.

VI. OBSERVERS

71. The Chairman recalled that at its last meeting, the Committee had not been able to reach a consensus on the various requests for observer status. On the basis of information provided in advance of this meeting, it appeared that the Members concerned were not yet in a position to join a consensus on the matter.

72. The representative of Mexico indicated that his delegation supported granting observer status to OIRSA and IICA. No objections had been raised with respect to these two organizations, and he believed that the Committee could take a decision to grant them observer status.

73. The representative of Guatemala, supported by Chile, Costa Rica and Venezuela, noted that Members who were not in a position to join a consensus should justify their views. His delegation had long supported granting observer status to OIRSA, and supported Mexico with regard to IICA. Developing countries had a particular interest in this issue, because in their region, these organizations were actively involved in the implementation of the SPS Agreement. His country had a number of technical and financial actions in conjunction with OIRSA, for example on quarantine treatment and border inspection services. OIRSA had activities in the animal health area and in plant protection, a factor that limited its participation in the Committee meetings under the umbrella of the IPPC, as suggested in previous meetings. He recalled that consensus had to be reached on each organization for each meeting (G/SPS/W/98 refers), hence Members could decide on further participation in the individual cases in the light of the contributions to the work of the Committee.

74. The representative of Hungary considered that, in the light of the information supplied, OIV was an obvious candidate to be granted observer status. He expressed concern with the objections raised by some Members, despite the relevance of the OIV to the activities of some WTO bodies such as the TRIPS Council. He invited those Members who opposed granting observer status to OIV, in clear contradiction with the agreed criteria, to inform the Committee of the basis for their position.

75. The representative of the European Communities indicated that he was concerned with the lack of transparency in the Committee on this matter. It was regretful that no consensus had yet been reached on this issue. He recalled the criteria agreed by the Committee and noted that the description of each of the different applicants' activities and responses, including OIV, met the criteria. He recalled that one Member had invoked the lack of transparency of OIV to justify opposition to granting observer status to that organization. However, the OIV had engaged in a process of review of its internal arrangements. A review committee had been created in which the United States, like others, was represented and had actively participated. This review committee had met several times during the year and the principle of consensus approval had been agreed. There was the intention to vote on the review process at the next OIV general assembly. The OIV had long since been recognized by Codex as the competent organization in this area. Among the applicant organizations, the OIV was the only standard-setting organization. Furthermore, the last OIV assembly, held in January 1999, indicated the willingness of the OIV to modify substantially its internal regulations. The OIV budget had been approved and all delegations had agreed to pay their share of the budget. He believed that, in view of this information, the United States claim of lack of transparency in the work and voting procedures could be dismissed. He reiterated that the Committee's agreed criteria for observer status was not being followed and consequently the procedure was not credible. His delegation considered it urgent to clarify the issue and to decide. He was ready to analyse the different applications, but requested that such analysis be made on a credible basis. If the criteria were not applied in the same way to all applicants, the procedure would not be credible and he would again be forced to request its suspension. The European Communities had no objections to granting observer status to the other applicant organizations, but not granting the same status to the OIV would be discriminatory and there were no objective reasons underlying such exclusion. If the United States could not accept the OIV request, they must give specific and clear reasons for their attitude. Finally,

he observed that only the United States opposition stood in the way of consensus. In these circumstances, he proposed that a representative of the OIV be invited to explain the OIV review process at an informal meeting of the Committee.

76. The representative of the United States reiterated that his delegation was prepared to join a consensus to grant observer status to OIRSA, EFTA, SELA and IICA. He recalled that at the last meeting the Committee had agreed to grant observer status on an ad hoc and case-by-case basis. This was consistent with the General Council guidelines (WT/L/161) as amended and included by reference in the Secretariat summary of the proceedings of the Committee in considering ad hoc observers. The United States believed that there were serious outstanding questions about the OIV functioning as a representative intergovernmental body, as well as with its decision-making process and ability to provide reciprocity with respect to access to proceedings. The recent audit of the OIV recommended significant changes to the OIV structure and functions. These changes had not yet been adopted by the OIV general assembly. If such changes were adopted, the OIV might undergo major organizational changes which would make it a more representative and transparent body. Until the OIV implemented those changes, it would not be possible for the United States to determine if it met the criteria identified by the Committee for ad hoc observership. This situation should not preclude the acceptance of other intergovernmental bodies that had requested observer status and met the criteria. It was not appropriate to restrict the Committee to accepting or rejecting all of the applicant organizations as a single package, which was not an agreed criteria. He added that his delegation objected to the European Communities' proposal for an informal meeting of the Committee with the presence of an OIV representative to explain the review process.

77. The representative of Uruguay, supported by Switzerland, Chile, Norway, Guatemala, Hungary, Cyprus and the European Communities, noted that this issue affected the credibility of the Committee and more broadly of the WTO. He wondered why COSAVE was not included in the list of organizations requesting observership. He recalled the meaning of ad hoc observer status and in particular its temporary nature, and proposed that such status be granted to all applicants for the next meeting. The situation in the OIV could continue to be analysed and those Members concerned could raise such concerns directly and OIV could answer. If the situation remained unclear after the next Committee meeting, the OIV would not be invited for the following meetings.

78. The representative of Cyprus felt that the information submitted by the OIV was sufficient and the observership criteria were met. The Committee should consequently proceed with granting the OIV observer status. To proceed differently would raise the issue of discrimination towards a particular organization, and if this was the case, Cyprus would not be in a position to join a consensus on any organizations.

79. The representative of Canada, supported by Mexico, expressed his delegation's concern with a process that consisted in holding the application of a number of organizations hostage to a lack of consensus on one of the applicants. He urged all Members to agree to grant ad hoc observer status to all other applicants and to resolve the difficulties on OIV at the next Committee meeting. He suggested that, in the light of the discussions at the special transparency meeting and under technical assistance and cooperation, at least those organizations that represented the interests of developing countries should be granted observer status at the present Committee meeting.

80. The Chairman suggested that the Secretariat request information pertaining to the review process from the OIV for circulation to Members. He noted that there were a number of Members requesting that the issue of observership of the other organizations be dealt with in accordance with the agreed criteria.

81. The Committee agreed to invite the following organizations as ad hoc observers for the next meeting: ACP, EFTA, IICA, OECD, OIRSA and SELA.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

82. With regard to Japan's notification G/SPS/N/JPN/37, the representative of the European Communities recalled that at the previous Committee meeting his delegation had requested to be informed of the scientific rationale for a quarantine list for plant protection purposes, but had not received a response from Japan. The representative of Japan announced that his authorities would continue discussions of the matter raised by the European Communities on a bilateral basis.

83. The European Communities recalled the United States' notification G/SPS/N/USA/121, regarding a measure that created serious distortions to trade of rhododendrons. He requested information whether the risk analysis initiated by the United States had been finalized and if the measure had been reviewed accordingly, as announced by the United States delegation at the previous Committee meeting. The representative of the United States responded that the final rule would be published in the very near future.

84. The representative of Poland informed the Committee of developments on the issue of the Slovak Republic phytosanitary regulations regarding potatoes and fruit, including apples, pears and quinces (G/SPS/GEN/159 refers). The representative of the Slovak Republic regretted that Poland had once more brought this issue to the attention of the Committee, omitting to discuss it at the more appropriate expert level. He stressed that the Slovak Republic was free from the occurrence of potato quarantine bacterial diseases. In order to preserve this status, the Slovak phytosanitary authorities regularly conducted rigorous surveillance pursuant to the FAO/ISPM surveillance guidelines, as well as tests of all domestic producers' consignments and imports pursuant to EPPO guidelines. Taking into account the rapid dissemination of potato quarantine bacterial diseases in Europe between 1995 and 1997, the Slovak Republic maintained a rigorous surveillance system in order to avoid what could result in serious damage to the disease-free status of the territory and heavy economic losses and costs to re-establish the disease-free status. His authorities had duly notified its import measures to the WTO (G/SPS/N/SVK/15) and, following discussions with trading partners, had modified these measures accordingly. The measures were based on a pest risk analysis in accordance with EPPO recommendations and had been published in the Slovak Republic's Official Journal. He provided a detailed response to the Polish statement (G/SPS/GEN/159).

85. The representative of Uruguay drew the attention of the Committee to his authorities' concerns regarding two recent rejections of Uruguayan exports of meat and dairy products to El Salvador. When a complete import documentation was submitted to them, El Salvador authorities had orally refused to grant the required import authorization invoking the inadequacy of Uruguayan sanitary measures to meet El Salvador's requirements. Despite his authorities' requests, El Salvador had not provided the texts of relevant requirements. In 1996, El Salvador had sent a team to Uruguay that had inspected dairy products and meat plants and had received all the required information from the Uruguayan authorities. Since then, El Salvador had repeatedly, but only verbally, indicated to his authorities that there were no impediments to imports of animal products from Uruguay. He requested that, in the light of this information, El Salvador officially accept the sanitary status of his country, as recognized by the OIE and many other countries, including the most demanding ones. Uruguay remained ready to review its sanitary measures in the light of possible developments in El Salvador, as long as the necessary justification was submitted in written form to his authorities and in accordance with WTO requirements. The representative of El Salvador responded that she would transmit the concerns expressed by Uruguay to her authorities.

86. The representative of Mexico informed the Committee that his authorities were reviewing their phytosanitary regulations in order to eliminate quarantine requirements with respect to imports of rice from Thailand. The draft regulation would be published in the Official Journal for comments and would be subsequently published in its final form. Thailand's ambassador in Mexico had been informed of this development and had received the text of the draft measures. The representative of

Thailand thanked the Mexican delegation and indicated that his authorities were looking forward to the publication of the final measure and its notification to the WTO.

87. The representative of the Philippines expressed her government's concerns with regard to the decision of the Belgian authorities to withdraw from sale Philippine canned tuna in oil, based on allegations of its contamination with biphenol-A-diglycydyl and biphenol-F-diglycydyl or "badge". There were no Codex standards for these substances, nor did they exist in the European Communities or Belgium. The Belgian action lacked transparency. In the absence of international standards, the SPS Agreement required Members to publish any proposed regulation at an early stage in order to allow other Members to be acquainted with the proposal and to be able to comment. The Philippines had requested the Belgian authorities to provide them with the necessary information, but had not yet received it. The measure had already caused serious economic losses to Philippines' exporters of these products and her authorities looked forward to an expeditious clarification of the situation.

88. The representative of the European Communities responded that the Philippine canned tuna in oil had been tested by a Belgian magazine, following which the Belgian Ministry had enquired about the possible contamination. One Belgian supermarket had subsequently withdrawn a lot of Philippine canned tuna in oil. He was not aware of any measures by Belgian authorities to block the sales of the Philippine product. He would nonetheless request information from the competent Belgian authorities and invited the Philippines to take a similar initiative with regard to its sanitary authorities. His delegation would be happy to pursue the matter on a bilateral basis with the Philippines.

89. The representative of Argentina expressed her concerns with the contents and publication of US measures dealing with imports of citrus fruit from north-western Argentina. These measures had been negotiated with the US authorities during seven years, and the phytosanitary harmonization between the two countries had been finalized a year ago. The United States had published the draft text for public comment and since then it kept postponing the publication of the measures. This situation cost about US\$300 per hectare to the Argentine producers who were not in a position to negotiate export contracts with the US importers. If the US measures were not published by the end of the year, the next harvest would be lost. The representative of the United States answered that the draft measures had passed the technical level and he would draw the attention of his authorities to the concerns expressed by Argentina.

VIII. DATE AND AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING

90. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 15-16 March 2000. The Committee agreed on the following tentative agenda:

1. Proposed agenda
2. Election of Chairperson
3. Implementation of the Agreement
 - (a) Information from Members
 - (i) Activities of Members
 - (ii) Follow-up to issues previously raised
 - (b) Specific trade concerns
 - (c) Consideration of specific notifications received
 - (d) Any other matters related to the operation of transparency provisions
4. SPS Agreement and developing countries
5. Technical assistance and cooperation
6. Monitoring of the use of international standards

7. Consistency - Report by the Chairman on consultations
8. Matters of interest arising from the work of observer organizations
9. Observers - Requests for observer status
10. Other business
11. Date and agenda of next meeting

91. The representative of New Zealand, supported by Australia, proposed that the Committee set dates for future meetings at least one year in advance, whether on a rolling basis (at each meeting the date for the corresponding meeting one year ahead would be set), or in block (dates for all of the meetings for the following year would be set at the first Committee meeting each year). The Committee should adhere to such dates. The Committee could ask the observers of the standard-setting bodies to actively publicize the meetings of the SPS Committee in their organizations, to prevent conflict and, whenever possible allow back-to-back meetings.

92. The Chairman reminded delegates that the deadlines for requesting the inclusion of specific items on the agenda, or receiving submissions from Members under the respective agenda items, were as follows:

Further comments on Article 5.5 draft guidelines	10 December 1999
Circulation of revised Article 5.5 draft guidelines	Mid-February 2000
Agenda item 3: Monitoring procedure: New specific examples	9 February 2000
Further information on the questionnaire on technical assistance	25 February
Further information on the websites questionnaire	25 February
Agenda item 2: (b) Specific trade concerns and (c) notifications	2 March 2000
Airgram	3 March 2000
