

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

**PROCEDURE TO MONITOR THE PROCESS
OF INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION**

Draft Fifth Annual Report¹

A. INTRODUCTION

1. At its meeting of 15-16 October 1997, the SPS Committee adopted a provisional procedure to monitor the process of international harmonization and the use of international standards, guidelines or recommendations, as provided for in Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement.² At its July 1999 meeting, the Committee decided to extend the provisional monitoring procedure and review its operation by July 2001.³ In July 2001, the Committee agreed to further extend the provisional procedure for 24 months, and to review its operation in July 2003 to determine at that time whether to continue with the provisional procedure, amend it, or develop another one.⁴

2. The Committee has previously adopted four annual reports on the monitoring procedure.⁵ These reports summarized several standards-related issues that the Committee had considered and the responses received from the relevant standard-setting organizations.

B. NEW ISSUE

3. One new issue has been raised since the adoption of the Fourth Annual Report. At the meeting of the Committee held on 7-8 November 2002, the United States proposed that the Committee request the OIE to revise Chapter 2.1.14 of the International Animal Health Code to include procedures for low-pathogenic strains of avian influenza (see document G/SPS/GEN/343). The Animal Health Code currently deals only with highly pathogenic avian influenza.

4. The representative of the OIE reported that an expert group meeting on avian influenza had been held in Paris the first week of November 2002. He noted that several Members had requested that the chapter of the Animal Health Code dealing with avian influenza be expanded to cover low pathogenic strains and frequently traded products. He further stated that the recommendations of the expert group would be reviewed by the Code Committee at the end of November and submitted for consideration by the General Session of the OIE in May 2003.

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.

² G/SPS/11.

³ G/SPS/14.

⁴ G/SPS/17.

⁵ These were circulated as G/SPS/13, G/SPS/16, G/SPS/18 and G/SPS/21.

C. RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM THE RELEVANT STANDARD-SETTING ORGANIZATIONS

Requirement for control of Infectious Bursal Virus in cooked chicken meat – Response from the OIE

5. In June 2002, the OIE informed the Committee that infectious bursal disease had been included in its work programme for the following year.⁶ The OIE was waiting for research results in order to progress in this area, but had not yet received information. The representative of the OIE encouraged Members to provide information on this disease.

⁶ G/SPS/R/27.