

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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

Draft Sixth 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 The Committee decided to extend the provisional monitoring procedure for a further two-year period in July 1999, and again in July 2001.³ On 25 June 2003, the Committee agreed to further extend the provisional procedure for 36 months, and to review its operation in July 2006 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 five 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 ISSUES

3. There were no new issues raised in the SPS Committee since the adoption of the Fifth Annual Report.

C. ISSUES PREVIOUSLY RAISED

Implementing the Standards of the OIE

4. At the SPS Committee meeting in October 2003, the OIE presented a communication that addressed apparent misunderstandings about the nature and purpose of the OIE international standards, their implementation and interpretation.⁶ The OIE also suggested how OIE standards should be referred to in a Member's SPS notifications.

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 and G/SPS/17.

⁴ G/SPS/25.

⁵ These were circulated as G/SPS/13, G/SPS/16, G/SPS/18, G/SPS/21 and G/SPS/28.

⁶ G/SPS/GEN/437