

**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR WORKSHOP ON TRANSPARENCY**

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

1. The SPS Committee will hold a special workshop on transparency provisions on 15 October 2007. This will be the third such special Committee meeting on transparency since 1995.
2. Members have underlined the need to lay the necessary groundwork in advance of this workshop with a view to making it a results-oriented and problem-solving workshop.
3. Discussions and inputs under the Second Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement, as well as under the transparency agenda item of the SPS Committee, have already underlined a number of issues of relevance for the workshop. In addition, 58 Members have replied to a detailed questionnaire on the operation of their Enquiry Points and Notification Authorities. A Secretariat Note summarizing the results and highlighting some of the main issues raised was circulated on 21 February 2007 (G/SPS/GEN/751).<sup>2</sup> The SPS Committee had some preliminary discussions on this Note during its February/March meeting.
4. In response to a request by Members and in light of the issues that have been raised thus far, the Secretariat has prepared a draft programme for the transparency workshop to be held on 15 October 2007. Members are invited to comment on this draft programme during the informal meeting of the SPS Committee on transparency which will be held on 26 June starting at 10.00 a.m.

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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.

<sup>2</sup> A revision to this document, incorporating replies submitted after the original deadline, will be issued shortly as G/SPS/GEN/751/Rev.1

## TRANSPARENCY WORKSHOP

### PROPOSED PROGRAMME

**Monday, 15 October 2007**

- 09.30 – 09.45            Opening remarks by the Chair
- 09.45 – 10.15            General introduction – WTO Secretariat
- Including:*
- 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 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 to be based on an indicative list of questions to be prepared by the Secretariat in light of Committee discussions / results of Transparency Questionnaire. Topics to cover could 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
  - provision 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
- 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 / relevant Embassies
  - interagency coordination and oversight of comments on notifications of concern;
  - awareness of tools and options through the SPS Agreement / Committee decisions / Secretariat
- 13.00 – 14.30            Lunch break

- 14.30 – 15.00 Presentation by a delegation on awareness raising and/or on how to benefit from outgoing as well as incoming notifications
- 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 - 11.30 Reporting on break-out sessions by rapporteurs followed by 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.)

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