

**CHILE'S POSITION ON REGIONALIZATION
GUIDELINES FOR 2008**

Communication from Chile

The following communication, received on 20 March 2008, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Chile.

1. In the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Chile has been one of the driving forces behind more effective implementation of the principle of regionalization, especially in view of the differences between Members as regards time-frames for recognition of the sanitary or phytosanitary status of disease- or pest-free area. The differences arose chiefly for administrative and operational reasons, even when countries had followed all the procedures laid down by scientific reference organizations such as the OIE and the IPPC.
2. Chile had three objectives when the Committee began its discussions:
 - (a) The first was prioritization of the issue by the international scientific organizations, which was clearly done, as recommendations more closely targeted at recognition procedures have been established. As a result, the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures will be required to monitor implementation of the international body of standards, as stipulated in Article 12 of the Agreement.
 - (b) The second was to provide for a permanent item on Committee meeting agendas, which would be dedicated to implementation of Article 6 of the Agreement on regionalization, and under which Members could put forward their experiences and problems concerning implementation of the principle and scientific organizations could provide information on progress they had made.
 - (c) The third was to agree on guidelines for the recognition process that more closely followed the provisions of Article 6 of the Agreement. This will facilitate the monitoring of international OIE and ICCP standards.
3. Concerning information from international organizations, the objective has been fully met. On the other hand, information from Members is chiefly provided under other agenda items, particularly as regards implementation of the Agreement and trade concerns, even where these relate to recognition of sanitary status. Subsequent evaluation of problems and progress in implementing the regionalization principle will be more difficult as a result.

4. Today, Chile is especially interested in the following two aspects:
 - (a) The expedited procedure in the event of a renewed outbreak that has been promptly eradicated, which, according to international guidelines, would not mean loss of disease- or pest-free status and would therefore shorten the recognition process;
 - (b) notification of the Committee of bilateral procedures between two countries for the recognition of sanitary and phytosanitary status, thus making the Committee aware of undue delays, if any, whilst facilitating the international standards monitoring process.
 5. As an exporting and importing country, as indeed most other Members are, Chile is interested in these questions from both standpoints. Without placing sanitary and phytosanitary status at risk, this will ultimately mean adopting measures based on scientific grounds, which should not give rise to undue delays once the appropriate guarantees have been fulfilled and provided.
 6. Partial evaluation of the extent to which objectives have been achieved shows that the international organizations have prioritized the issue, regionalization has become a permanent item on the agendas of Committee meetings and all that remains to be done is to make better use of that opportunity.
 7. Although the plan to provide guidance or guidelines for the process of recognition of sanitary and phytosanitary status has yet to be implemented, the project is well under way. According to available information, the paper produced by a group chaired by New Zealand, in which Chile participated, seems to us to be a good document that should be endorsed, on the understanding that it may be improved through future revisions but that it would spell some progress in an area in which agreement appeared impossible to begin with.
 8. Another specific aspect that will undoubtedly be examined in the future is compartmentalization, which the OIE includes in regionalization. Should this be confirmed, the Codex Alimentarius Commission will need to be included in the scientific reference bodies regarding food safety, since compartmentalization has been quite extensively developed in the Commission's recommendations, and in its guidelines on good practice and quality assurance (HACCP) in particular.
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