

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPS COMMITTEE AND CODEX, OIE AND IPPC**

Comments and proposal by Japan

The following communication, received on 19 June 2008, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Japan.

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Second Review, which was concluded in 2005, recommended that the SPS Committee further clarify the relationship between the SPS Committee and the Codex, OIE and IPPC with a view to facilitating the implementation of the SPS Agreement while avoiding duplication of activities (G/SPS/36, para. 91). Responding to the recommendation, the WTO Secretariat presented G/SPS/GEN/775 at the 39th SPS Committee in June 2007 and provided background information on various aspects of the relationship between the implementation of the SPS Agreement and the work of the Codex, OIE and IPPC.

**PROPOSAL**

2. Japan would like to propose that the SPS Committee organize a workshop on the standard-setting procedures of the Codex, OIE and IPPC. Since there are a number of cross-sectoral issues under consideration such as "regionalization" or "private standards", Japan is of the view that such a workshop is necessary in order to understand the standard-setting procedures of the Codex, OIE and IPPC.

3. Article 3.1 of the SPS Agreement obliges Members to base their national requirements on international standards, guidelines and recommendations, where they exist. Therefore, Members are encouraged to effectively participate in the work of the standard-setting bodies, particularly in the elaboration of international standards. In this regard, Japan appreciates that the WTO Secretariat organized the workshop on "International Standard-Setting Organisations: Process and Participation" in March 2001.

4. Japan believes that the workshop was very successful and assisted developing country Members. However, Japan would like to draw attention to the fact that there have been systemic improvements at each international standard-setting body since 2001 as outlined below:

- (a) Codex
  - Establishment of the Codex Trust Fund in 2004, which has been contributing to increasing participation of developing countries in Codex meetings;
  - Introduction of a critical review in 2004 for ensuring that progress in the development of standards is consistent with the envisaged time frame; and
  - Adoption of both the Guidelines on Physical Working Groups and the Guidelines on Electronic Working Group in 2005.
- (b) OIE
  - Establishment of the Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety to coordinate the food safety activities of the OIE in 2002;
  - Introduction of a two-year cycle for standard-setting processes in 2005; and
  - Improvement of transparency in standard-setting processes, such as disseminating reports of General Sessions and Specialist Commissions via the OIE website.
- (c) IPPC <sup>1</sup>
  - Establishment of technical panels in specific areas to assist the work of the Standards Committee in 2004;
  - Introduction of the "fast track" standard-setting process in 2004, which was renamed as the "special" standard-setting process in 2008; and
  - Holding of regional workshops on draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures, in order to assist Member countries to have a clear understanding and to facilitate their national comments on the draft ISPMs.

5. In the light of the situations mentioned above, Japan proposes that the Secretariat organize a workshop to understand the standard-setting procedures of the Codex, OIE and IPPC in conjunction with a future meeting of the SPS Committee, in order to better assist developing country Members.

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<sup>1</sup> The International Plant Protection Convention (1997) was ratified in 2006.