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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**SOUTH AFRICA'S PROPOSAL ON THE ROLE OF ISSBS IN ADDRESSING  
SPECIFIC TRADE CONCERNS (G/SPS/W/304 AND G/SPS/W/304/ADD.1)**

SUBMISSION FROM THE "THREE SISTERS": CODEX ALIMENTARIUS, IPPC AND OIE

The following communication, received on 26 June 2019, is being circulated at the request of Codex Alimentarius, IPPC and OIE.

1. South Africa proposed that the SPS Committee Secretariat write to the International Standard Setting Bodies (ISSBs), requesting them to implement Recommendation 8:

- Recommendation 8: *Requesting the three Sisters to analyze the current specific trade concerns raised in the SPS Committee to see which of these could have been addressed by the use of the existing international standards.*

2. The ISSBs would be requested to:

- Analyze the specific trade concerns (STCs) and to identify those which could have been addressed by the use of existing international standards. The relevant ISSB will then submit a report to the Secretariat;
- Upon receipt of this report from each of the three ISSBs, it is proposed that the Secretariat share the report with the Committee and organize a workshop wherein each of the "Three Sisters" will share its analysis of the identified STC(s).

3. The three ISSBs have considered this proposal and have agreed to the following:

- It is necessary that ISSBs remain neutral on STCs, given that the interpretation of standards, guidelines and recommendations is the responsibility of each Member;
- The ISSBs could however provide clarification/complementary information upon request from WTO Members or the SPS Committee Secretariat during SPS Committee meetings, as long as this does not involve interpretation of the provisions in the international standard;
- Analyzing and reporting on STCs is outside of the ISSBs' respective mandates;
- This approach would require considerable staff resources and diverse technical expertise to review STCs, and the three ISSBs have limited resources for such an activity.

4. The ISSBs remind the SPS Committee of Members' obligations regarding prior notification of proposed SPS measures.

5. The ISSBs also wish to note that ISSBs have developed standards, guidelines and recommendations which are freely available on the internet. Information is available on the ISSBs' websites:

- OIE for animal health: <http://www.oie.int>
- IPPC for plant health: <https://www.ippc.int>
- Codex for food safety: <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius>

6. Members are encouraged to develop their understanding of the various standards adopted by Codex, IPPC and OIE in order to facilitate their implementation.