



8 June 2020

(20-4050)

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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

**FIFTH REVIEW OF THE OPERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE
APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

COMMUNICATION FROM BELIZE

The following communication, received on 5 June 2020, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Belize.

Belize takes this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for compiling and circulating the comments received from Members on the draft Report of the Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement.

Our intervention covers 3 issues:

1. The format of the report;
2. Decisions that were taken but which did not materialize as a result of the pandemic; and
3. The next steps – how to implement the decisions that are still pending.

1 THE FORMAT OF THE REPORT

1. Document [G/SPS/W/313/Rev.2](#), under the section "Voluntary Third-Party Assurance Schemes", contains an accurate summary of the discussions that transpired in the Committee under this agenda item and includes the decision of the Committee to hold a thematic session in March 2020.
2. We also recognize that document [G/SPS/W/325](#) only reflects recommendations and in so doing, unfortunately does not capture the decisions of the Committee.
3. It is our view that if the decision of the Committee is captured in a similar fashion as the recommendations, the reporting will be balanced. As a result, we propose that the Committee's decision to hold a thematic session on Voluntary Third-Party Assurance be captured in a similar manner.
4. This recommendation would be subject to the acceptable approved WTO format for writing the report.

Recommendation:

- *The Committee had agreed to hold a Thematic Session on Voluntary Third-Party Assurance in March 2020, which had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee agrees to reschedule this Thematic Session as soon as the COVID-19 situation allows.*
5. We also agree with the inclusion of the footnotes with reference to the documents [G/SPS/W/320](#) and [G/SPS/GEN/1754/Rev.1](#).

6. Belize considers that if this is done, and the Committee desires to have a document which solely reflects recommendations, then it will also need to capture this decision.

2 DECISIONS THAT DID NOT MATERIALIZE DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

7. Considering that the Committee was unable to hold that session due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we feel that if the decision is not reflected under the revised draft recommendations for the Fifth Review of the Report, this decision could easily be lost.

8. We do not know how that can be done but would simply like to signal that it should be reflected in the Report.

3 THE NEXT STEPS – IMPLEMENTATION OF PENDING DECISIONS

9. We note that some Members have suggested the possibility of holding webinars to advance the work of the Committee, including exploring the possibility of using that avenue for covering some of the thematic sessions.

10. Belize would like to share that we are still reviewing this consideration and will need more time to explore this possibility due to several challenges: a webinar has a shorter time frame and less areas would be covered. The time difference (different countries have different time zones) is also another challenge, and last but not least, limitations in technology.
