

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED

G/SPS/W/91

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(98-4262)

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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PROCEDURE TO MONITOR THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION

Submission by the Philippines

In accordance with paragraph 6 of the provisional procedure to monitor the use of international standards (G/SPS/11), the Philippines proposes that the Committee consider the attached issue.

PROCEDURE TO MONITOR THE PROCESS
OF INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION

Submission by the Phillipines

Sauces

Commodities affected:	Sauces such as oyster sauce, fish sauce and others
Disease/problem/issue:	Use of benzoic acid as a preservative in sauces
Is international trade significantly affected because of this issue?	Yes. Trade in sauces is significantly affected. Use of preservatives in other or processed foods could also be affected.
Does there currently exist an international standard for this disease/problem/issue with these commodities?	There is no international standard; only individual country standards.
If so:	
Briefly describe the existing standard:	N/A
Is the international standard inappropriate?	N/A
<p>Description of how trade is affected by this issue and how the issue can be resolved through new or existing international standards:</p> <p>Benzoic acid is an anti-microbial preservative. It is used in sauces which require a shelf-life of 6-12 months and is therefore necessary in products marketed for export.</p> <p>The lack of an international standard hurts international trade because it allows countries to discriminate in the use of the additive.</p> <p>Benzoic acid has an ADI of 5 mg/kg body weight. This has been used as a reason for restricting its use, as high levels of consumption of foods containing the additive could create a health risk. However, as there are no internationally agreed methodologies for assessing risk due to dietary exposure to food additives, the potential for discrimination in usage exists.</p> <p>The use of benzoic acid in sauces is included in the draft Codex General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA). It is important that the GSFA be finalized soon by Codex as the lack of an international standard not only hurts international trade in sauces but has the potential to hurt trade in other processed food products where preservatives are used.</p>	