

PRESS RELEASE

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FRANCE CONTRIBUTES 1 MILLION FF TO TECHNICAL COOPERATION ON SPS AGREEMENT

France has contributed 1 million French francs to WTO technical cooperation funds. This donation will be used to organize workshops and seminars for developing countries on the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement.

"We are most grateful to France," said Mike Moore, WTO Director General in a letter addressed to the French Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. "This contribution will make it possible for us to continue and expand our technical assistance activities in the area of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. The objective of the SPS Agreement is to ensure that governments can protect human health, as well as animal and plant health, while avoiding unnecessary restrictions on international trade." The French contribution will allow the WTO Secretariat to help developing countries to achieve this objective.

The SPS Agreement requires WTO Members to base their sanitary and phytosanitary measures on scientifically-justified requirements. Trade of agricultural products is of particular importance for most developing countries and an appropriate understanding and application of the SPS Agreement is of critical importance. The French contribution is particularly welcome at a moment of increasing demand for technical assistance in this area from a wide range of WTO Members and acceding countries.

The payment of the contribution follows the signature of an agreement between the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the World Trade Organization.