

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

**PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR A WORKSHOP ON SPS COORDINATION AT
NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS**

Note by the Secretariat¹

1. In the Third Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement (G/SPS/53), the Committee agreed, *inter alia*:
 - (a) that it should follow-up on the recommendations that resulted from the October 2009 workshop (G/SPS/R/57) with a view to strengthening the relationship between the Committee and the Codex, IPPC and OIE; and
 - (b) to encourage Members to provide information on their experiences in coordinating their involvement in the work of Codex, IPPC and OIE at the national level.
2. The October 2009 workshop resulted in 11 recommendations which seek to improve coordination and collaboration between the SPS Committee, Codex, IPPC and the OIE (G/SPS/R/57):
 - (1) Moving the reports on activities of the three Sisters to earlier in the Committee's agenda;
 - (2) Increasing the number of joint capacity-building activities which could provide an opportunity to discuss current work, for example, draft standards;
 - (3) Joint work by two or all three Sisters on cross-cutting issues such as certification, inspection, approval procedures and/or risk analysis;
 - (4) Coordination meetings among the three Sisters and with the WTO Secretariat;
 - (5) Consideration of how to ensure equivalence among results of standards on related products;
 - (6) Soliciting more information at the strategic planning phase of the three Sisters' work;
 - (7) The SPS Committee transmitting information relating to trade issues linked to non-use of standards, absence of standards, or inappropriate standards to the relevant Sister organization;
 - (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;

¹ This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights or obligations under the WTO.

- (9) Better use by the SPS Committee of the information regarding the use of international standards which is available from the SPS notifications;
- (10) **Identifying ways to improve coordination at a national level of the relevant representatives of the three Sisters and SPS representatives;** and
- (11) The establishment of a "help desk" to answer enquiries and provide information in each of the three Sisters and the WTO Secretariat.

3. In its proposal on the work of the Committee arising from the Third Review, Japan suggested that Members and the WTO Secretariat explore ways to improve coordination at the national level (G/SPS/W/251).

4. The Secretariat will organize a special workshop on SPS Coordination at National and Regional Levels, to be held in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop will take place on Monday 17 October 2011. The SPS informal and regular meetings will be held on 18-20 October 2011.

5. The objective of the workshop is to bring together officials responsible for participation in and implementation of the SPS Agreement, Codex, IPPC and/or OIE for an in depth discussion, at a technical level, on best practices in coordination at national and regional levels:

- Delegates to the SPS Committee will have the opportunity to discuss how to improve coordination at the national and regional levels between their involvement in the work of the three Sisters, the SPS Committee and WTO more generally;
- Representatives of the three Sisters will be invited to share their experiences on coherence of national and regional positions at the standard-setting bodies and the SPS Committee;
- The Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) will present the results of two studies: (i) Regional SPS Frameworks and Strategies in Africa²; and (ii) Scoping Study on National SPS Coordination Mechanisms in Africa (ongoing work).

6. Members are invited to submit any suggestions they might have for the programme of the workshop by **27 May 2011**.

² http://www.standardsfacility.org/Files/Publications/STDF_Regional_SPS_Strategies_in_Africa.pdf