

TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Statement by Pakistan at the Meeting of 1-2 July 1997

1. We are extremely grateful to the Secretariat for a comprehensive note on technical assistance to developing countries in this area. We recall that this note has been prepared in response to a request by Pakistan, Egypt and India in the last meeting of the SPS Committee. We welcome the note which, in our view, provides a good basis for further discussion and necessary action. We believe that the issue of technical assistance to developing countries is very important, especially in view of the fact that the transition period for developing countries has already expired on 1 January 1997.

2. Our initial comments relate to three important points highlighted in the Secretariat's Note. These are:

- (a) Paragraph 7 of the Secretariat's Note refers to the need for coordination among relevant international organizations and Members providing technical assistance. This is very important to ensure effective utilization of scarce resources as well as wider coverage of countries that need technical assistance. We believe that we should deliberate upon the practical steps to improve this coordination. One possible way could be to use the relevant section in the WTO Secretariat/the SPS Committee as a focal point for coordination purposes. However, we would like to hear other practical proposals to achieve this objective.
- (b) Paragraph 8 of the Secretariat's Note refers to the issue of more active participation of developing countries in the relevant international organizations. In this respect, we may point out that many developing countries expressed the same concern in the last meeting of the Codex Commission held in Geneva. These developing countries were not completely satisfied with the present process which, in their view, does not fully take into account their concerns and does not give them a sense of full participation. We understand that developing countries will be taking up this issue in the relevant international organizations. However, we want to flag this issue for the attention of this Committee also and feel that comments and suggestions in this Committee could be useful for this purpose.
- (c) The Secretariat's Note also points out that its technical assistance activities have moved from an initial phase of creating general awareness into a more mature phase of responding to demand for specific activities. Paragraph 5(f) has also identified some useful field-related and specific technical assistance requirements. We agree with this identification. We also feel that:
 - (i) The level of general awareness in many developing countries is still limited.

- (ii) The list of specific technical assistance needs identified in paragraph 5(f) may be further expanded and elaborated.
- (iii) Developing countries may need technical assistance in order to identify their needs for specific technical assistance. This may be surprising to some but is a natural outcome of a lack of general understanding in this area in developing countries. We would therefore request that the WTO, other relevant international organizations and Members providing assistance should give due attention to this issue in their technical assistance programmes.

3. We also have two questions at this stage. First, the Secretariat's Note, in paragraph 3, has mentioned that regional seminars are planned in West Africa and India in late 1997. Can the Secretariat provide the names of the countries that will be invited to these seminars? Second, the Note mentions that some Members also provide technical assistance. Would it be possible to have a list of these Members to facilitate the requests for technical assistance from developing countries?