

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Statement made by Belize at the meeting of 8-9 October 2008

The following communication, received on 9 October 2008, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Belize.

1. The Belize delegation would like to thank the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) and the donor countries for the Project "Initiative of the Americas" which facilitated the participation of Caribbean delegates to the meetings of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in Geneva.

2. The experiences gained have been very valuable and have assisted several countries to be in a better position to enhance SPS capacity at the national level.

3. Belize would also like to thank IICA for several technical assistance activities being supported at the national level. In this regard, Belize would like to inform the Members of the WTO that a series of activities have already been planned in collaboration with IICA, for the period October to December 2008, and include the following:

- on 23 October 2008, a workshop on traceability will be conducted for over 60 participants from the private sector;
- on 29 and 30 October 2009, stakeholder consultations will be held on three draft bills: Food Safety Draft Bill, Animal Health Draft Bill and Plant Health Draft Bill. The objective is to sensitize and obtain feedback from stakeholders on the new laws that need to be passed to ensure that Belize is compliant with the international obligations to which it is already a signatory;
- An accountability seminar will be held on 13 November 2008 to inform stakeholders about what Belize has achieved through its participation in meetings of the OIE, IPPC, Codex and the SPS Committee;
- During the second week of December 2008, 25 industry personnel will be trained in the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

4. In Belize, the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) Tools developed by IICA for the evaluation of food safety, plant health and quarantine and SPS have been applied. IICA, in conjunction with the STDF Project # 108, will also be assisting Belize in the process of setting common vision on SPS matters.

5. It is hoped that this session will be conducted in January 2008. As a preliminary activity, the results of the PVS evaluations will be presented to stakeholders, along with the National Work plan for SPS. Belize hopes that at that meeting all stakeholders will be able to contribute to setting the national SPS vision for Belize.

6. We thank IICA once more for the technical assistance offered in the area of SPS and would like to inform Members that such activities should be encouraged and continued as they are extremely valuable.
