



Committee on Agriculture

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26-27 FEBRUARY 2019

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT¹

The Committee on Agriculture held its ninetieth (90th) regular meeting on 26-27 February 2019 under the Chairmanship of Ms. Débora Cumes of Guatemala.

The agenda of the meeting as set out in WTO/AIR/AG/35 was adopted with the following modifications:

- Part 1 (Review Process):
 - B. Article 18.6:
 - Thailand to co-sponsor the questions raised by Japan concerning India's support to rice exports (AG-IMS ID 90111)
 - Thailand to co-sponsor the questions raised by Canada and New Zealand concerning European Union's modification of agricultural schedules of commitment (AG-IMS ID 90087 and 90028)
 - The Secretariat informed that question AG-IMS ID 90031 was merged with question AG IMS ID 90028 concerning European Union's modification of agricultural schedule of commitments.
 - C. Counternotifications:
 - Australia to add its name to the counternotification submitted by Canada and the United States regarding India's market price support to pulses (G/AG/W/193 and corrigendum).
- Part 2 (Other matters within the purview of the Committee):
 - D. Other business
 - The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) to introduce its working plan for 2019 as contained in G/AG/GEN/150.

1 THE REVIEW PROCESS

1.1 Outstanding responses to questions raised, 2012-2018

1.1. The Chairperson noted the Secretariat's document G/AG/W/195 listed outstanding responses for 2012 to 2018. Since the list was first circulated on 28 May 2018 in document G/AG/W/177, five Members had provided 13 delayed responses to questions raised during 2012 to 2017. As of 14 February 2019, 58 questions addressed to 26 Members during 2012 to 2017 remained unanswered. As for the questions raised in 2018, 48 replies from 21 Members were still outstanding. The Chairperson highlighted an 18% reduction in outstanding responses in 2018, compared to the period of 2012-2017 and encouraged Members to further reduce their outstanding responses. The Chairperson invited Members to provide their responses either through the online system, by sending these responses to the Secretariat or by providing their responses during the Committee meeting under the relevant agenda item.

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 and obligations under the WTO.

1.2 Matters relevant to the implementation of commitments under the reform programme: Article 18.6

1.2. The 31 implementation-related issues raised as well as the responses provided, and follow-up exchanges were compiled in section 1 of document G/AG/W/196. These related to:

- a. Egypt's pest control subsidy (raised by the Australia);
- b. European Union's intervention policy (raised by New Zealand);
- c. India's support to rice exports (raised by Japan and Thailand);
- d. India's import duty protections (raised by the United States);
- e. India's soymeal export subsidies (raised by the United States);
- f. India's proposed domestic support measures (raised by the European Union);
- g. Mexico's Strategic Programme of Guaranteed Prices (raised by the Canada);
- h. Republic of Moldova's environmental charges (raised by Ukraine);
- i. New Zealand's support to dairy processing facilities (raised by the European Union);
- j. Nigeria's domestic support programmes (raised by Australia)
- k. Russia's increased support to dairy sector (raised by the European Union);
- l. Switzerland's "Loi Chocolatière" and implementation of the Nairobi Decision on export competition (raised by the European Union);
- m. Thailand's support to palm oil growers (raised by the European Union);
- n. U.S. Farm Bill 2018 (raised by Australia, the European Union and India);
- o. U.S. trade promotion payments (raised by the European Union);
- p. U.S. Boston Bounty Bucks Funds Programme (raised by India);
- q. Canada's new milk ingredient class (raised by New Zealand and the United States);
- r. Canada's wine sale policy (raised by the United States);
- s. EU's CAP Reform (raised by Australia);
- t. European Union's modification of agricultural schedule of commitments (raised by Canada, New Zealand and Thailand);
- u. Ghana's poultry imports (raised by the United States);
- v. India's pulses policies (raised by Australia, Canada, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States);
- w. India's sugar policies (raised by Australia);
- x. India's skim milk powder export subsidies (raised by the European Union);
- y. Mongolia's quota regime for importation (raised by the Russian Federation);
- z. Pakistan's wheat export subsidies (raised by the United States);
- aa. Sri Lanka's tax on imported milk powder (raised by New Zealand);
- bb. Turkey's flour export and Turkish Grain Board (raised by the European Union),
- cc. U.S. proposed domestic support measures (raised by Australia);
- dd. U.S. support to cotton sector (raised by India);
- ee. Zimbabwe's tobacco export incentive (raised by the United States).

1.3 Review of Notifications

1.3. The Chairperson informed Members that since the November 2018 meeting the Committee had received 82 notifications. These had been distributed electronically to all delegations.

1.3.1 Notifications in respect of which questions have been raised in advance of the issuance of the convening airgram

1.4. Section 2 of document G/AG/W/196 reflects the questions concerning individual notifications raised in advance of the issuance of the convening airgram², the responses provided and Members' follow-up comments.

1.3.2 Deferred replies to questions raised under the review process

1.5. A total of three questions were raised under this agenda item.³ Section 3 of document G/AG/W/196 reflects the questions raised, responses provided, and Members' follow-up comments.

1.3.3 Overdue notifications

1.6. The Committee took note of the document summarizing the current status of Members' compliance with notification obligations.⁴

1.7. The Chairperson recognized Members' efforts to bring their notifications up to date noting that a number of Members had recently submitted agriculture notifications covering multiple years as an important effort in addressing outstanding notifications. Since the November meeting, a number of Members had submitted agriculture notifications covering multiple years. For instance, China had submitted their Table DS:1 notification covering the years 2011 to 2016; Turkey had notified a Table DS:1 notification for the years 2006 to 2009; and Japan had notified Table ES:3 notifications covering the years 2013 to 2016.

1.8. Despite these important efforts, the Chairperson noted that work remained to be done in the area of transparency and highlighted a few numbers with respect to outstanding notifications. For the period 1995 to 2016:

- 36% (798) table DS:1 domestic support notifications remained outstanding; and
- 34% (838) export subsidy notifications in the Table ES:1 series remained outstanding.

1.9. Members had posed questions to four Members under this item. The questions, corresponding answers and Members' follow-up comments can be found in section 4 of document G/AG/W/196.

1.10. The Chairperson highlighted the importance of transparency and called on Members for increased efforts to get up to date with their notification obligations. The Chairperson also highlighted the various databases that could help Members manage information and facilitate the work of Committee.

1.3.4 Notifications subject to review in respect of which no questions have been raised in advance of the issuance of the convening airgram

1.11. The Committee took note of the 52 notifications circulated before 15 February 2019, including notifications carried over from the November 2018 meeting but in respect of which no questions had been raised by that date under the Committee's working procedures.⁵

1.3.5 Notifications circulated after the issuance of the convening airgram

1.12. Thirteen notifications had been circulated after the issuance of the convening airgram on 15 February 2019:

- European Union: Table ES:1 and ES:2 for 2017 (G/AG/N/EU/51 and G/AG/N/EU/52);
- European Union: Table ES:3 for the years 2010 until 2017 (G/AG/N/EU/53);
- European Union: Table MA:2 for 2018 (G/AG/N/EU/50);
- Two corrigenda from the European Union: G/AG/N/EU/38/Corr.1 and G/AG/N/EU/44/Corr.1;

² WTO/AIR/AG/35, Attachment Section B.

³ WTO/AIR/AG/35, Attachment Section C.

⁴ G/AG/GEN/86/Rev.34.

⁵ WTO/AIR/AG/35, Attachment Section D.

- Japan: Table DS:1 for 2015 and 2016 (G/AG/N/JPN/235 and G/AG/N/JPN/236);
- Mongolia: Table DS:1 for 2014 and 2015 (G/AG/N/MNG/10);
- Switzerland: Table ES:1, ES:2 and ES:3 for 2017 (G/AG/N/CHE/89, G/AG/N/CHE/90 and G/AG/N/CHE/91); and
- Tunisia: Table DS:1 for 2017 (G/AG/N/TUN/56).

1.13. These notifications would be reverted to for substantive review during the next regular meeting, in accordance with the Committee's working procedures.

1.3.6 Points concerning notifications raised at previous meetings which have been pursued bilaterally: information regarding outcome where the issue involved is one of general interest

1.14. There were no requests for the floor under this agenda item.

1.3.7 Counternotifications (Article 18.7 of the Agreement on Agriculture)

1.3.7.1 Certain measures of India providing market price support to cotton – Communication from the United States

1.15. Canada, the United States and Australia presented their counternotification addressing certain measures by India providing market price support to pulses including chickpeas, pigeon peas, black matpe, mung beans and lentils.⁶ Canada highlighted that the data on the five varieties of pulses discussed in the counternotification had been obtained from publicly available sources. Canada noted that the counternotification contained an explanation of the methodology used. With regards to eligible production, Canada stated that there was jurisprudence from the Korea – Beef case that clarified that this referred to the production that was fit or entitled to be purchased rather than the production that was actually purchased. Canada further noted that in marketing year 2016-2017, India had not limited the quantity of chickpeas, pigeon peas, mung beans, black matpe or lentils. Therefore, all Indian production of each pulse constituted eligible production for calculating market price support for each pulse. Canada stated that India's AGST set the external reference price for each pulse except for lentils and further noted that India notified its market support price as an aggregate which raised some issues with the calculation methodology used as India did not have an external reference price for lentils. Canada further added that India announced MSP for pulses at different rates for each pulse type. While India had provided value of production data when requested by Members during the review process, Canada stated that India had not provided this information as best practice in its 2016-2017 domestic support notification. Therefore, this data had to be sourced from India's national accounts statistics. Finally, Canada stated that the counternotification showed that the apparent market price support ranged from 31.7% to 85.3% of the value of production for these pulses.

1.16. The United States stated that the counternotification was intended to contribute to robust discussions on how India implemented and notified its domestic support policies. The United States highlighted the lack of sufficient responses by India with regards to disparities between how it implemented market price support for pulses and how it notified these measures. The United States argued that the agricultural policies in India were relevant components of the global agricultural landscape, particularly in the pulse market where India was the largest producer, consumer and importer. The United States noted that in addition to market price support, India had also made use of a variety of other trade policy instruments including other domestic support measures, increased tariffs, quantitative restrictions, export controls and export subsidies to achieve various policy objectives with respect to pulses.

1.17. Australia noted that the issues raised in the counternotification were not limited to pulses and it applied to other commodities such as cotton, sugarcane, rice and wheat as evidenced in previous counternotifications. Australia noted that while the counternotification related to the marketing year 2016/2017 there were similar concerns regarding other years. Australia questioned the fact that India had aggregated a series of pulses into a single product category while it maintained separate and distinct minimum support prices for specific pulses. Australia was of the view that India's excessive market price support for pulses had led to domestic overproduction and the need to introduce a series of trade restrictive measures since late 2017 to deal with this oversupply.

⁶ G/AG/W/193.

According to Australia, in addition to raising tariffs, India had imposed quantitative restrictions and had failed to explain the WTO basis in the various WTO Committees. Australia stated that India's measures had had significant negative impacts on Australian pulse exporters. In the case of chickpeas, Australian exports had declined by almost 99%. Similarly, Australia's pea exports to India had fallen from USD 60 million to USD 7 million in the same period.

1.18. India noted that India's minimum price support for pulses was intended to ensure that poor farmers did not have to resort to distress sales. Small quantities of pulses had been procured by the government agencies at administered prices since 1995-1996 and that the average annual procurement of pulses within the last five notified years (2011-2012 to 2016-2017) had been less than 1.5% of the total production. With regards to the issue raised on external reference prices for only four of the five pulses in its original AGST document (chickpea, pigeon pea, mung beans and black matpe), India noted that despite not having notified lentils in the AGST document it had notified domestic support provided to lentils since 2001-2002. India had been notifying aggregated product specific support for pulses since its first domestic support notification for the year 1995-1996. On the issue of currency, India reiterated that the AoA did not place a binding obligation on India to notify in a specific currency. India had been notifying its domestic support in USD since 1995-1996. Concerning eligible production, India noted that the term "production eligible to receive the applied administered price" had not been defined under the AoA. In India, only that part of marketable surplus meeting the required quality parameters, and which was offered by farmers to the designated government agencies for procurement at market support price was eligible for procurement. India added that the findings in the Korea – Beef case were specific to certain circumstances and that the findings of the Appellate Body should not be treated as precedence providing jurisprudence and creating new rules. India noted that there was no obligation to provide data on the value of production and expressed its willingness to do so should this requirement be applicable to all Members. In conclusion, India reiterated that the methodology used by India was fully consistent with its obligations under the AoA.

1.19. Various Members welcomed the counternotification. The European Union highlighted the importance of completeness and accuracy of information in the notifications including the use of a correct basis for its calculations. The European Union supported the call for India to change its methodology for future notifications. According to the European Union, the methodology used by India in the Table DS:1 notification did not align with the outcome of the Korea – Beef case which was relevant to India's market price support for pulses.

1.20. The European Union, echoed by New Zealand, recognized Members' right to provide support to their farmers and made a call to Members to reduce trade distorting support and to adopt more effective policies to support farm income. Ukraine noted its interest in Members following a common methodology in their notifications to achieve comparable data results. Paraguay also echoed the need for increased transparency and noted the potential global imbalances caused by this type of policy.

1.21. The United States reminded Members that their commitments and the currency used to measure those commitments were set out in the Schedule of commitments in AGST documents. In India's case, the AGST documents provided domestic support commitments and minimum support prices in Indian rupees. Regarding India's use of an aggregated all-pulse market price support, the United States noted that no change in India's market support price programme had been identified after the AGST that could justify a switch to the use of an aggregated market price support for the five pulses. Therefore, in the counternotification market support price for five separate prices had been calculated rather than the aggregated support price that India used. Canada further noted that the market price support provided by India to producers of these varieties of pulses was significant and that it affected global production and trade.

2 OTHER MATTERS WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE

2.1 Implementation issues (G/AG/16, G/AG/16/ADD.1, G/AG/22)

2.1. There was no request for the floor under this agenda item.

2.2 Implementation of Ministerial outcomes

2.2.1 Review of the Bali Ministerial Decision on TRQ administration

2.2. The Chairperson provided her report on the informal meeting regarding the review of the Bali Decision on TRQ administration held on 25 February 2019. The Chairperson stated that discussions on the informal meeting were principally based on the first draft of the report of the review prepared by the Secretariat.⁷ Some Members had submitted written comments on the draft report in advance of the meeting which were subsequently circulated to all Members to facilitate discussions.

2.3. The Chairperson had underlined that the draft report by the Secretariat reflected the elements that came up in the discussions, but it didn't, in any way, prejudge the final report of the review and the relevant recommendations that Members would collectively adopt in the Committee for transmission to the General Council. Some Members had observed that the listing of specific elements in the draft report should not imply agreement. Among the various elements, the issues of improving TRQ transparency including harmonization of Members' notification practices, reallocation requirements, S&D aspects, and practical applicability of the underfill mechanism had been raised in a number of interventions. About improving TRQ transparency, there had been a broad support to target this aspect as a possible outcome of the review; some Members had pointed out that the on-line agriculture notification system would also support the transparency objectives. On some of the specific elements, Members had expressed contrasting positions. For example, some Members had made the point that S&D should not be diluted whereas some others had emphasized that S&D should not lead to exemptions from obligations for select Members. On TRQ reallocation, some Members had wanted to focus the discussions on the reallocation of unused licences whereas some others had emphasized the importance of such reallocation requirements for country-specific TRQs.

2.4. Some Members had again made the point about the scope of the ongoing review and the need to distinguish it from the market access negotiations. Retaining paragraph 4 of the underfill mechanism and ensuring applicability of the Bali TRQ decision to all Members had also been emphasized. Another Member had alluded to its possible exclusion from Annex B provided the obligations in paragraph 4 of the underfill mechanism applied uniformly to all Members. One Member had renewed its demand that the Secretariat should seek Members' views on the practical applicability of the underfill mechanism based on a questionnaire.

2.5. The Chairperson had emphasized the need and the urgency to focus the review discussions on the framing of possible recommendations for the consideration of the General Council. Various Members had also emphasized that the review of the Bali TRQ decision would need to continue beyond the stipulated deadline of 31 December 2019 and that this should be acknowledged in the Committee recommendations. A suggestion had been made to have a regular review of the Bali TRQ Decision at an agreed frequency. In response to a specific question by the Chairperson on the timeline of review by the CoA, a preference had been expressed for the Committee to finalize its report and recommendations by June 2019 as per the agreed process and timelines. The Chairperson had indicated that she would consult with Members and organize additional informal meetings to assist them towards the finalization of the report of the review and the associated recommendations. A compilation document based on Secretariat's draft report incorporating Members' comments and the discussions during the February informal meeting would also be made available to Members to facilitate the discussions.

2.2.2 Follow-up on the Nairobi Decision on export competition including preparation for the June 2019 Export Competition Dedicated Discussion.

2.6. The Chairperson noted that the Committee concluded in June 2018 its third dedicated discussion on export competition since the Nairobi Decision. Questions and responses provided during those discussions were circulated in document G/AG/W/182. The Secretariat background document was revised after the June CoA meeting and circulated in document G/AG/W/125/rev.9 and addenda on 24 July 2018.

⁷ G/AG/W/192.

2.7. The Chairperson noted that as part of the monitoring of this Decision, Members also had the possibility to raise questions during other meetings under this agenda item. In this context, the United States had posed questions to India, Thailand and Turkey.⁸ The questions, responses and follow-up comments can be found in section 5 of document G/AG/W/196.

2.8. Concerning updates on the implementation of the Nairobi Ministerial Decision, the Chairperson noted that out of the 16 Members with export subsidies reduction commitments in their schedules, eight Members had their revised draft export subsidies schedule fully certified pursuant to the Nairobi Decision on Export Competition (Australia, Norway, Israel, Switzerland, Colombia, Uruguay, the United States and South Africa). Two Members had submitted their draft revised Schedules, but these were not certified yet (the European Union and Canada). The Chairperson noted that Mexico had circulated on 10 January its draft revised schedule.

2.9. The Chairperson invited the remaining Members with scheduled export subsidy commitments to provide an update on their implementation of the Nairobi Decision. Brazil stated that due to the change in administration, it had not been able to conclude the administrative proceedings to implement the Nairobi Decision. Brazil clarified that the time it was taking to implement the Decision was due only to administrative issues as Brazil had not provided export subsidies for several years. Indonesia stated that it had finished drafting the presidential decree that would fully implement the Nairobi Decision and that it had been postponed due to presidential elections. Indonesia stated that it would continue with the process once the general election was over but that it was not yet able to set a fixed timeline. Indonesia stated that it had not provided export subsidies on rice up to 2017 as stated in its table ES notifications. Iceland informed Members that it would formally submit on 26 February 2019 the changes to its Schedule for circulation to the Membership. Finally, Turkey informed the Committee that its ministry of trade was reviewing the final version of its Schedule and that it planned to submit it to the WTO soon.

2.10. Regarding the preparation for the 2019 June Dedicated Discussion, the Chairperson reminded Members that an email was circulated on 25 October 2018 to initiate the next dedicated discussion on export competition scheduled for the June CoA 2019 meeting. A reminder had been subsequently submitted on 8 February. The deadline for replies to the questionnaire was 22 March 2019 and two submissions had been received thus far.

2.11. The Chairperson noted that the proper implementation of this Decision required a well-functioning monitoring mechanism based upon transparency. The Chairperson strongly encouraged all Members to reply to the questionnaire at their earliest convenience. This was critical to ensure the success of the next annual dedicated discussion on export competition. The Chairperson also reminded Members that while replies were expected first and foremost from Members who use export subsidies or export measures covered by the Decision, Members who did not use such measures were also invited to reply to the Secretariat with a quick "nil" reply.

2.2.3 Implementation of other Ministerial outcomes

2.12. There were no requests for the floor under this agenda item.

2.3 Chair report on remaining issue from informal meeting- Enhancing transparency and the CoA Review Process.

2.13. At the informal meeting that took place on 25 February regarding transparency and the CoA Review Process, the Chairperson had reminded Members the two issues that had been highlighted in previous Committee's discussions on this topic: (i) improving timeliness and completeness of notifications and (ii) the monitoring of outstanding responses to questions in the Committee's Review.

2.14. With respect to (i) improving the timeliness and completeness of notifications, the Chairperson had noted that the Committee had considered in previous informal meetings Members' notification practices, particularly how the timing of Members' submissions related to the guidance on notification requirements contained in G/AG/2. In this regard, Norway had previously submitted a couple of papers on this subject for discussion in the informal meetings held in September and November 2018

⁸ WTO/AIR/AG/35, Attachment Section E.

where Members had exchanged views on Norway's suggestion that revised deadlines in G/AG/2 could help to increase transparency.⁹ During these discussions, some Members had supported Norway's suggestion to modify the deadlines set forth in G/AG/2 noting that the collection of data was complex thus the deadlines set forth in the notification requirements were unrealistic, while others had been of the view that relaxing the deadlines could lead to reduced transparency. In general, many Members had noted that a continued exchange on best practices would be useful to understand the obstacles Members faced in preparing notifications. Members also had highlighted the role that capacity building and the new on-line notification system could play in tackling some of the problems faced when preparing notifications.

2.15. The Chairperson noted that at the informal meeting held on 25 February, Norway had introduced its room document RD/AG/69/Rev.2 noting that the intention of the document was to continue pushing for reduced backlog regarding notifications in agriculture. Norway had highlighted that its new document had been expanded in three ways: (i) it included all Members with current total AMS commitments that had submitted at least one Table DS:1 notification; (ii) it included a list of Members that had still not notified a Table DS:1 notification for 2015; and (iii) it covered Table MA:2 notifications from all 40 members with WTO import quota commitments.

2.16. Norway had noted that ambitious, but doable deadlines for notifications in agriculture were only one element in a broader transparency picture. Other important elements were promoting electronic notifications, improving the quality of notifications and answering questions raised in the CoA review process, preferably in advance of the meeting.

2.17. Norway had underlined that other notifications included in G/AG/2 were ad hoc notifications. Furthermore, some notifications were gradually becoming less relevant due to the phasing out of export subsidies. This meant that when discussing deadlines for notifications in G/AG/2, Table DS:1 and MA:2 notifications were the two most important notifications to look into. Norway had highlighted that 9 out of 31 members with current total AMS commitments submitted Table DS:1 notifications within 12 months. For the 22 selected Members in table 2 with no current total AMS commitment, 13 had submitted Table DS:1 notifications within 12 months. This meant, according to Norway, that 12 months was an ambitious, but doable deadline. Norway had further noted that to improve notification practices, it was also important to look at the 17 Members that still had not notified a Table DS:1 for 2015. These Members were almost three years behind the deadlines specified in G/AG/2.

2.18. Norway had stated that focusing in best practices would yield better transparency results than introducing financial penalties for Members with a substantial notification backlog. Norway had noted that continued technical assistance from the Secretariat targeting the 29 members who had never submitted a Table DS:1 notification would be helpful. The sharing of experiences among Members on how to improve notification practices would also be helpful.

2.19. Regarding Table MA:2 notifications, Norway had noted that while some Members only had a few quotas to notify and others had numerous quotas, most members with TRQ commitments were not able to notify within 60 days, as required by G/AG/2, but that it should be doable to notify a Table MA:2 notification within six months.

2.20. The Chairperson noted that Members had welcomed Norway's submission. In response to a question raised concerning developed-country Members' failure to comply with deadlines set forth in G/AG/2, a number of these Members had noted the practical challenges faced when collecting data necessary for the preparation of notifications. One Member had recognized the need to modify the G/AG/2 deadlines, while another had noted that if G/AG/2 was to be revised, Members should also consider revising the list of significant exporters contained in G/AG/2/Add.1. Some Members had noted that while timeliness was important, completeness of notifications was equally important. One Member had called for positively framed discussions on some of the aspects raised, including the use of electronic systems to help better implement the AoA transparency requirements and the possibility of submitting provisional notifications.

2.21. With respect to the (ii) monitoring of outstanding responses to questions in the CoA Review Process, the Chairperson had noted that the Secretariat had produced a document for the February 2019 CoA meeting summarizing outstanding responses from 2012 to 2018 (G/AG/W/195). This

⁹ G/AG/W/185 and RD/AG/65

document had shown that Members had made good progress in addressing outstanding responses, especially from the most recent years (2016 and 2017). For those two years more than a third of the responses that were outstanding at the beginning of 2018 had been provided.

2.22. The Chairperson had also highlighted the enhancements foreseen in the current AG-IMS. The Secretariat had been taking steps to improve Members' ability to track repeated questions in the AG-IMS, a modification that had initially been proposed by Ukraine in their document "Proposal for exploring potential AG-IMS improvements".¹⁰ In addition, the Secretariat had been exploring modifications that would allow Members to more easily identify which questions had pending responses. These enhancements to the system were expected to be completed by the second half of 2019.

2.4 Other business

2.4.1 On-line submission of notifications

2.23. The Secretariat reminded Members that at the end of 2018 the Secretariat had circulated to Members an invitation to join the pilot group to test the function for the online submission of agriculture notifications. A total of ten Members had expressed interests in participating in the pilot phase. It was expected that these Members would be able to submit notifications online starting in April and that the system would be available to all Members by the June Committee meeting. The Secretariat would organize an information session on the margins of that meeting to highlight important features of the system and to provide additional information to all Members on how to access and use the system. The Secretariat was also working on updating the existing datasets of notified information with new notifications and migrating those data to the new system. The Secretariat reminded Members that it was available for questions and noted that one-on-one training sessions on the new system could be scheduled upon request; these sessions could also be provided via skype or video conference to capital-based notification experts.

2.4.2 2019 notification workshop

2.24. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the 2019 advanced workshop on notifications in agriculture would be held from 30 April to 3 May. The selection process had recently concluded and a total of 30 government officials from 30 developing country Members had been selected for funded participation. Four of these participants come from least developed countries and six from net food importing developing country Members. The workshop would address the prescriptions and models for notifications in the area of agriculture, the importance of transparency and the review process of the Committee on Agriculture. Participants would also practice the preparation of notifications using the new function for the online submission of agriculture notifications of the AG-IMS. The Secretariat reminded developing country Members that national workshops on agricultural notifications could be requested to the Secretariat through the WTO Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation. Finally, the Secretariat noted that a symposium on agriculture was being organized to be held during the week of the June 2019 CoA meeting and that more detailed information would soon be provided.

2.4.3 Information from the IICA

2.25. The IICA presented its work plan for 2019 as contained in G/AG/GEN/150. The IICA highlighted the activities developed in relation to the work of the CoA which included the participation and attendance of meetings of the Committee on Agriculture; preparation of a paper on the IICA's contribution to the Marrakesh Decision and food security; support to technical cooperation activities related to agricultural trade; monitoring of areas of common interest to the WTO and the IICA; compliance by countries with agriculture notification requirements; and preparation of technical documents.

¹⁰ G/AG/W/167.

2.4.4 Date of next regular meetings

2.26. The Chairperson proposed that the ninety-first (91st) regular meeting of the Committee on Agriculture be held on 25-26 June 2019. On this basis, the airgram convening the meeting would be issued on 14 June 2019.
