



**Committee on Agriculture**

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30-31 OCTOBER 2019**

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT<sup>1</sup>

The Committee on Agriculture held its ninety-second (92<sup>nd</sup>) regular meeting on 30-31 October 2019 under the Chairmanship of Ms. Christiane Daleiden Distefano of Luxemburg.

The agenda contained in the convening airgram WTO/AIR/AG/40 circulated on 18 October 2019 was adopted with the following modifications under Part 1.B: The Review Process, matters relevant to the implementation of Commitments under the reform programme raised under Article 18.6 of the Agreement on Agriculture:

- Australia co-sponsored questions raised by New Zealand and the United States of America regarding Canada's compensation for farmers after trade concessions (AG-IMS ID 92077);
- Australia co-sponsored questions raised by New Zealand and the United States of America regarding Canada's New Milk Ingredient Class (AG-IMS ID 92078);
- Australia co-sponsored questions raised by New Zealand and the United States of America regarding EU's intervention policy (AG-IMS ID 92080 and 92006); and
- The European Union requested to make a statement regarding the EU-28 draft Schedule CLXXV.

**1 THE REVIEW PROCESS**

**1.1 Outstanding responses to questions raised, 2013-2018**

1.1. The Chairperson stressed the importance of timely responses to questions raised in the Committee's review process. The Chairperson noted the Secretariat's document G/AG/W/195/Rev.2 distributed on 17 October that contained details of outstanding responses under the CoA review process from 2012 to 2018. Responses to a total of 55 questions raised between 2012-2017 and 39 questions raised in 2018 remained outstanding. While there had been reduction in the number of outstanding responses, the Chairperson urged Members to continue their efforts to reduce outstanding responses.

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

1.2. There were 42 specific implementation matters (SIMs) raised at the 92<sup>nd</sup> CoA meeting under Article 18.6, including a statement from the European Union regarding the EU-28 draft Schedule CLXXV.<sup>2</sup> Members' responses and follow-up comments are available in the Agriculture Information Management System (AG-IMS)<sup>3</sup> and may be consulted there using the relevant question ID numbers as provided in Table 1 of the Annex to this report.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> WTO/AIR/AG/40, Attachment Section A. The full version of the questions raised can be found under section 1 of the compilation document G/AG/W/202.

<sup>3</sup> <http://agims.wto.org/>.

### 1.3 Review of Notifications

1.3. The Chairperson informed Members that since the June 2019 meeting the Committee had received 150 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. Table 2 of the Annex to this report includes the list of questions relating to individual notifications raised in advance of the issuance of the convening airgram.<sup>4</sup> Members' responses and follow-up comments can be accessed through the AG-IMS.

#### 1.3.2 Overdue notifications

1.5. The Committee took note of the document summarizing the current status of Members' compliance with notification obligations.<sup>5</sup>

1.6. The Chairperson recognized Members' efforts to bring their notifications up to date noting that a number of Members had submitted agriculture notifications covering multiple years. For example; Afghanistan had notified Table ES:1 notifications covering 2016-2018, Argentina provided Table DS:1 notifications covering 2014-2016, the Republic of Korea and the Philippines provided Table ES:1 and Table ES:2 respectively for 2014-2017. Further, Lesotho notified Table ES:1 notifications covering the period 2013-2018, Myanmar notified Table ES:1 covering the period 2005-2014 and Oman provided Table DS:1 for the years 2014-2018. The Plurinational State of Bolivia had submitted Table DS:1 notifications covering the years 2006-2018.

1.7. The Chairperson also drew Members' attention to the overall situation with respect to outstanding domestic support and export subsidy notifications for the period 1995 to 2017:

- 34% (811) Table DS:1 domestic support notifications remained outstanding; and
- 31% (859) export subsidy notifications in the ES:1 series remained outstanding.

1.8. Members had posed questions to six Members under this item.<sup>6</sup> Members' responses and follow-up comments can be accessed through the AG-IMS (See Table 3 of the Annex to this report).

1.9. The Chairperson highlighted the importance of transparency and called for increased efforts by Members to catch up with their notification obligations. The Chairperson also highlighted the various databases maintained by the Secretariat that could help Members manage information and facilitate the work of the Committee.

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

1.10. The Committee took note of the 92 notifications circulated before 18 October 2019, including notifications carried over from the June 2019 meeting but in respect of which no questions had been raised by that date under the Committee's working procedures.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> WTO/AIR/AG/40, Attachment Section B. The full version of the questions raised can be found under section 2 of the compilation document G/AG/W/202.

<sup>5</sup> G/AG/GEN/86/Rev.36.

<sup>6</sup> The full version of the questions raised can be found under section 3 of the compilation document G/AG/W/202.

<sup>7</sup> WTO/AIR/AG/40, Attachment Section C.

### **1.3.4 Notifications circulated or made available after the issuance of the convening airgram**

1.11. Twenty-four notifications had been circulated after the issuance of the convening airgram on 18 October 2019:

- Plurinational State of Bolivia - Table DS:1 - G/AG/N/BOL/14 to G/AG/N/BOL/26 (2006-2018) and Table ES:1 - G/AG/N/BOL/12 (2017) and G/AG/N/BOL/13 (2018);
- Cameroon - Table DS:1 - G/AG/N/CMR/11 (2018) and Table ES:1 - G/AG/N/CMR/12 (2018);
- Chile - Table DS:1- G/AG/N/CHL/55/Corr.1 (2016) and G/AG/N/CHL/56/Corr.1 (2017);
- Colombia - Table DS:1 - G/AG/N/COL/69 (2016);
- Costa Rica - Table DS:1 G/AG/N/CRI/73 (2018);
- Cuba - Table DS:1 - G/AG/N/CUB/62/Corr.1 (2018); and
- Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela - Table MA:2 - G/AG/N/VEN/29 (2016) and G/AG/N/VEN/30 (2017).

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

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

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

### **1.3.6 Counter-notifications under Article 18.7 of the Agreement on Agriculture**

1.14. No counter-notifications under Article 18.7 were made for this Committee meeting.

## **2 OTHER MATTERS WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE**

### **2.1 Annual monitoring exercise on the follow-up to the Marrakesh NFIDC Decision under Article 16.2 of the Agreement on Agriculture**

2.1. Article 16.2 of the Agreement on Agriculture mandates the Committee on Agriculture to monitor, as appropriate, the follow-up to the Marrakesh Ministerial Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-developed and net food-importing developing countries (the NFIDC Decision). The Chairperson recalled that pursuant to paragraph 18 of its working procedures (G/AG/1), the Committee undertakes the annual monitoring exercise based on two main sources of information, namely actions by donor Members within the framework of the NFIDC Decision as reported in their Table NF:1 notifications, and the contributions made by inter-governmental organizations having observer status in the Committee.

2.2. The Committee took note of the following Table NF:1 notifications circulated since the November 2018 monitoring exercise:

- Australia - G/AG/N/AUS/119, G/AG/N/AUS/124;
- Canada - G/AG/N/CAN/115/Corr.1, G/AG/N/CAN/130;
- European Union - G/AG/N/EU/49, G/AG/N/EU/54;
- Indonesia - G/AG/N/IDN/62;
- Japan - G/AG/N/JPN/229;
- Norway - G/AG/N/NOR/107; and
- Switzerland - G/AG/N/CHE/86/Rev.1.

2.3. The Committee also took note of a revised background note circulated by the Secretariat on the implementation of the NFIDC Decision to facilitate Members' consideration of this agenda item.<sup>8</sup> The note sets out the substantive provisions of the NFIDC Decision and provides information regarding their implementation.

2.4. The Secretariat briefly introduced the revised document and highlighted the new elements included therein based on request by Members in previous Committee meetings. The note accordingly included a summary of donor Members' latest Table NF:1 notifications and also presented agriculture and food<sup>9</sup> import data with respect to LDCs and NFIDCs for the period 2008 to 2017. The Secretariat also noted the challenges with regard to the availability of the global food aid shipments data since the discontinuation of World Food Programme (WFP)'s INTERFAIS in 2014 and highlighted the efforts made by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to fill the resulting data gap. The Secretariat also informed Members of its continued collaboration with the relevant international organizations in the domain of international food aid.

2.5. The European Union thanked the Secretariat for the updated document, and particularly for the inclusion of a summary of Members' Table NF:1 notifications. The European Union noted that several Members did not provide information concerning the total quantity of food aid and whether or not the food aid was provided in fully-grant form. The European Union encouraged Members to provide such information in the future.

2.6. Egypt, on behalf of the NFIDC Group, thanked the Secretariat for the valuable analysis provided in the background document. Egypt noted that while food imports of the LDCs and NFIDCs had increased in the period between 2008 and 2017, further measures were required to enable LDCs and NFIDCs to address the rising food security challenges. Egypt requested the Secretariat to provide detailed analysis on the evolution of agricultural production in LDCs and NFIDCs examining the progress made in agriculture productivity and infrastructure. Referring to the participation of the NFIDCs in the agriculture negotiations, Egypt noted that food security remained at the very core of their reform objectives. Egypt stressed that any discussion in the framework of the Committee on Agriculture in Special Session should be conducted bearing in mind the challenges faced by LDCs and NFIDCs, as acknowledged by Ministers in the Marrakesh Decision. In the agriculture negotiations, NFIDCs should be accorded with appropriate measures of flexibilities to achieve food security, livelihood security and overall development objectives.

2.7. Norway referred to its latest Table NF:1 notification and noted that all the food assistance provided to LDCs and NFIDCs was cash-based and in fully grant form. In 2018, the Norwegian emergency food assistance and long-term support to agriculture development totalled approximately USD 220 million; of which USD 95 million was channelled through the WFP. Norway commended the efforts made by the WFP in the domain of humanitarian food assistance and encouraged Members to facilitate WFP's work. Furthermore, Norway noted that its action plan titled '*Food, People and the Environment*'<sup>10</sup> had been developed based on the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The overall objective of the Action Plan was to ensure greater food security through the development of sustainable food systems; covering the thematic areas of food production, value creation and market, nutrition, diet, policy and governance. Norway noted that the action plan would guide Norway's contributions to food systems including food assistance provided in the future. Norway also highlighted its targeted efforts towards small scale farmers and fishermen, with a particular focus on LDCs in the Sub-Saharan Africa.

2.8. Canada expressed concerns on the lack of availability of food aid data and appreciated the efforts made by the FAO in this regard. Canada encouraged continued collaboration among the relevant international organizations towards enhanced transparency of food aid to foster the implementation of the NFIDC Decision. The European Union also noted that it was aware of the existing challenges related to food aid data arising from the discontinuation of WFP's INTERFAIS and hoped that the FAO would be able to do more in the future.

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<sup>8</sup> G/AG/W/42/Rev.20.

<sup>9</sup> The food basket considered in the document comprised cereals, meats, dairy, fruits and vegetables, oil seeds and vegetable oils.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/sustainablefood\\_actionplan/id2661208/](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/sustainablefood_actionplan/id2661208/)

2.9. The representatives of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the FAO made contributions to the monitoring exercise. The IGC submitted a written contribution prior to the meeting. The Committee took note of these statements.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.1.1 Review of the International Food Aid provision of the Nairobi Ministerial Decision on Export Competition**

2.10. In paragraph 32 of the Nairobi Decision on Export Competition, Members agreed to review the provisions on international food aid forming part of the Decision within the regular CoA monitoring of the implementation of the NFIDC Decision.

2.11. The Chairperson recalled that the Nairobi Decision had three complementary provisions for the review and follow-up to be undertaken by the Committee, namely the annual dedicated discussions on export competition, the triennial Review of the Decision, and the specific review of the provisions on international food aid within the NF monitoring exercise.

2.12. With respect to international food aid, the Chairperson highlighted the need to address issues related to the transparency of Members' food aid programmes as well as the existing data gaps. The Chairperson also recalled the information session on food aid organized by the Secretariat on 24 June 2019 which benefitted from an active participation of the FAO, the WFP, the OECD-Development Assistance Committee and the Chairman of the Committee administering the Food Assistance Convention. The information session provided an overview of the current landscape of disciplines on international food aid and the monitoring and data collection practices of the relevant international organizations in relation to food aid.

2.13. Norway echoed the importance of increased transparency in the domain of international food aid and that the data and information gap would need to be addressed through cooperation among the relevant international organizations.

### **2.2 Annual consultation under Article 18.5 – Members' participation in the normal growth of world trade**

2.14. The Chairperson recalled that Article 18.5 provided for Members to consult annually with respect of their participation in the normal growth of world trade in agricultural products within the framework of commitments on export subsidies. The Chairperson added that Members' compliance with their notification obligations in the export subsidy area was crucial to enable the Committee to undertake the consultations. The revised compliance document reflected the state-of-play of Members' compliance with their notification obligations including in the export subsidy area.<sup>12</sup> The document showed that for the implementation period 1995-2017, 859 Table ES:1 notifications and 42 Table ES:2 notifications had remained outstanding.

2.15. The Committee took note of the background document prepared by the Secretariat for this exercise.<sup>13</sup> The document provided data on export volumes<sup>14</sup> and shares in world exports, for selected agricultural products/product groups covering a ten-year period from 2008 to 2018. The pie charts for 2008 and 2018 showed the evolution of world market shares of the leading exporters for the products/product groups concerned. The Secretariat also highlighted that due to lack of data for some exporters in the source database (i.e. UN COMTRADE) for the year 2018, the document had underreported total exports for some products (such as rice) for that year.

2.16. Brazil informed the Committee that it had been able to maintain its position as the top exporter of some agriculture products (oilseeds, sugar, poultry meat and tobacco) and was becoming the top exporter of bovine meat, whilst keeping low levels of domestic support and without the provision of export subsidies. Brazil noted that various factors had contributed to export growth including its comparative advantage, productivity gains resulting from investments in science and technology and actions on production diversification and food safety, while protecting biodiversity. Brazil emphasised that in order to use trade as a tool to achieve food security, it was essential to

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<sup>11</sup> The statements by the IICA, the IGC and the FAO were circulated to the membership respectively in G/AG/GEN/154, G/AG/GEN/155 and G/AG/GEN/156.

<sup>12</sup> G/AG/GEN/86/Rev.36.

<sup>13</sup> G/AG/W/32/Rev.18.

<sup>14</sup> Except for fruits and vegetables and live animals where the data was in value terms.

maintain predictability in international agricultural markets. For instance, uncertainties caused by unpredictable SPS measures put in place without scientific evidence had the potential to serve as barriers to trade.

### **2.3 Implementation-related issues<sup>15</sup>**

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

### **2.4 Implementation of Ministerial outcomes**

#### **2.4.1 Review of the Bali Ministerial Decision on TRQ administration**

2.18. The Committee held an informal meeting on 29 October to discuss the report of the review of the Bali Ministerial Decision on TRQ administration and the associated recommendations for the consideration of the General Council. In order to reach an agreement on a consensual language to propose an extension of the deadline for the future operation of paragraph 4 of the underfill mechanism, a small group consultation was held soon after the informal meeting leading to positive results. The report with the agreed recommendations was distributed in document G/AG/W/203 for consideration by Members at the formal meeting of the Committee on 31 October.

2.19. The Committee adopted the report and the associated recommendations with the understanding that the report and recommendations, upon adoption, would be transmitted to the General Council for a decision pursuant to the Bali Decision. Subsequent to the adoption by the Committee, the report was distributed as G/AG/29.

2.20. The Chairperson thanked Members for their constructive engagement in the review discussions. The final outcome included important agreements in relation to transparency, where Members also had agreed to conduct a triennial review of the operation of the Bali TRQ Decision. The Chairperson noted that time was not ripe to reach an understanding on the future operation of paragraph 4 of the underfill mechanism, and hence Members had agreed to extend the deadline by two years to reach a decision. The Chairperson further noted that while it was challenging to find a common language to propose the extension, Members had demonstrated sufficient flexibility and mutual understanding to agree on a two-year extension. The Chairperson also attributed special appreciation to her predecessor from Guatemala, Ms. Débora Cumes, and the support provided by the Secretariat throughout the process.

2.21. The European Union welcomed the efforts by Members and noted that the outcome was very minimalistic and much below its expectations. The European Union expressed its readiness to continue discussions on the Bali TRQ review to reach a more substantive outcome in two years' time.

2.22. Australia thanked the Chairperson and her predecessor; and the Secretariat for their contribution. Australia noted that the review process had been challenging but it had resulted in many suggestions leading to a positive engagement among Members. Australia thanked the Cairns Group for their submissions during the review, particularly to Costa Rica for their coordinated efforts, and registered their willingness to contribute in future discussions.

2.23. Guatemala congratulated the Chairperson on the adoption of the report and thanked the Secretariat and Members for their support and patience. Guatemala iterated that with coordinated efforts, the Membership could make substantial accomplishments.

#### **2.4.2 Follow-up on the Nairobi Decision on export competition including preparation for the June 2020 Export Competition Dedicated Discussion.**

2.24. The Chairperson noted that in June 2019, the Committee concluded its fourth dedicated discussion on export competition since the Nairobi Decision. The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Secretariat's background document was revised after the June meeting and

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<sup>15</sup> See WT/MIN(01)/17 dated 14 November 2001.



circulated in document G/AG/W/125/Rev.11 and its four addenda on 18 September 2019. Later, a corrigendum was circulated on 3 October 2019.<sup>16</sup>

2.25. As part of the monitoring of the implementation of this Decision, two Members raised questions under this agenda item.<sup>17</sup> Members' responses and follow-up comments are available in AG-IMS<sup>18</sup> and may be consulted there using the relevant question ID numbers as provided in Table 4 of the Annex to this report.

2.26. With regard to the modification of export subsidy schedules pursuant to the Nairobi Decision, the Chairperson noted that out of the sixteen Members with export subsidy reduction commitments at the time of adoption of the Nairobi Decision, eleven Members had certified revised schedules; two Members, Canada and the European Union, had circulated their draft schedules in 2017 but these were not yet certified; and three Members, Brazil, Indonesia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, had yet to circulate their draft schedules.

2.27. Brazil informed the Committee that the Nairobi Decision along with the draft revised schedule had been sent to the Congress in September 2019, in accordance with their constitutional obligations. Brazil iterated that the required steps were under way to provide all the necessary information that could facilitate the analysis by the Congress. Brazil highlighted that this issue was granted a high priority by the Congress based on the request by the Brazilian government. Brazil noted that it remained committed to the disciplines of the Nairobi Decision and hoped to receive the Congress' approval in the near future.

2.28. Indonesia informed the Committee that it would consult with their capital and revert on the process.

2.29. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela informed Members that there had been a change of authorities in their capital and that the Permanent Mission would be examining outstanding matters with respect to international organizations. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela conveyed its intent to keep the Committee abreast of the national processes and assured that the required steps were under way.

2.30. The European Union reiterated that all Members with export subsidy reduction commitments should submit their revised schedules as soon as possible. The European Union recalled that in 2017, it had submitted a draft EU-28 Schedule that included the elimination of export subsidies, as provided for in the Nairobi Decision. In practice, the European Union had not provided any export subsidies since July 2013, nor had it used any of the flexibilities provided under footnote 4 of the Nairobi Ministerial Decision.

2.31. Canada thanked the European Union for their reaffirmation of the commitment to the Nairobi Decision. Canada further informed of the positive bilateral engagement with the European Union on this issue and signalled that it would lift the reservation on the draft EU-28 export subsidy schedule.

2.32. With regard to the scheduling of the 2020 dedicated discussion on export competition, the Chairperson proposed for the exercise to take place at the September 2020 CoA meeting, instead of it to be held in June as previously, on account of the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference scheduled in Nur-Sultan on 8-11 June 2020. The Chairperson noted that an email communication initiating this exercise would be sent to Members in January 2020.

#### **2.4.3 Implementation of other Ministerial outcomes**

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

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<sup>16</sup> G/AG/W/125/Rev.11/Add.2/Corr.1.

<sup>17</sup> Section 4 of document G/AG/W/202 refers.

<sup>18</sup> <http://agims.wto.org/>.

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

2.34. The Chairperson reported on the discussions of the informal meeting held on 29 October on the theme of "Enhancing transparency and the CoA Review process". Three specific topics were discussed during the informal meeting: i) the joint submission by the African Group, Cuba, India and Oman on "An inclusive Approach to Transparency and Notification Requirements in the WTO";<sup>19</sup> ii) monitoring of responses to outstanding responses;<sup>20</sup> and iii) the report by the Chair on the consultations with Members to discuss various issues relating to the Committee and enhancing Members' participation in the CoA.

2.35. On the joint submission by the African Group, the proponents recognized the importance of transparency, and underlined the need for a holistic consideration of transparency for the work of the WTO rather than limiting the discussions solely to notifications. The authors of the paper noted that transparency would also mean that WTO meetings and decision-making processes were transparent and would enable participation of all Members, especially developing country Members. The proponents also highlighted that transparency had been considered in their submission as a horizontal or a cross-cutting matter hence the reason for its submission in a number of councils and committees.

2.36. In respect of compliance with notifications, the proponents highlighted the various capacity constraints and challenges faced by developing country Members in meeting notification requirements and emphasized that delays in notifications should not be tantamount to wilful non-compliance. The proponents argued for a cooperative rather than punitive approach to enhance notification compliance. They resisted accepting new notification obligations and suggested that the notification obligations should be adapted to developing country needs and capabilities. Referring to the Secretariat's notification compliance documents issued in the G/AG/GEN/86/ series, the developing country proponents also highlighted that the compliance was lacking not only for developing country Members but also for a number of developed country Members; they urged that Members with final bound total AMS should seek to abide by the required 120 days deadline in submitting the annual DS:1 notifications.

2.37. Other Members acknowledged the challenges faced by developing country Members in meeting their transparency requirements and offered their assistance as necessary. They noted the importance of transparency as a "common good" to the Membership and to the work and functioning of the WTO. As regards the concerns expressed by the developing country Members on assuming additional or new notification obligations, it was pointed out that the broader efforts on enhancing transparency were not for adding new notifications, but rather for meeting the existing notification requirements in a timely and comprehensive manner. Additionally, the transparency proposal also provided for opportunities for capacity building, practical timeframes and simplification of notifications. The discussions also touched on the issue of notification requirements in G/AG/2 and the prescribed deadlines therein. A number of Members questioned the practicability of the 3-month deadline for the annual DS:1 notification without compromising the quality and the content of the notification. Simultaneously some reluctance was noted in extending the existing G/AG/2 deadlines. Many Members referred to the efforts by the Secretariat in assisting Members to address notification-related challenges including in the form of on-line enhancements.

2.38. Under the second item on outstanding responses, the Chair referred to the latest Secretariat document in G/AG/W/195/Rev.2 containing a list of questions raised in the review process during 2012-2018 where the responses had remained outstanding. The Chair noted that since the commencement of this discussions in 2018, the Secretariat had regularly circulated a document before each Committee meeting tracking the status of outstanding responses to questions raised since 2012. Members showed progress in terms of outstanding responses to questions raised during 2012-2017 where outstanding responses had been reduced from 71 to 55. For questions raised during 2018, the number of outstanding responses had gone down from 48 to 39, as could be seen in the latest document circulated by the Secretariat in G/AG/W/195/Rev.2. Since June 2019, there had been only two responses submitted by Members, both in respect of questions raised

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<sup>19</sup> JOB/AG/158/Rev.2.

<sup>20</sup> G/AG/W/195/Rev.2.



during 2018. The Chair urged Members to make serious efforts to improve the current situation of pending responses so as to enhance the efficacy of the CoA review process.

2.39. Thirdly, the Chair also reported on the consultations with Members to discuss various issues relating to the Committee and enhancing Members' participation in the CoA. The Chair indicated that one of the main motivations for these consultations, organized in the first week of October, had been to explore ways of enhancing participation of Members, especially developing Members, in the CoA review process. The Chair noted that there was only a limited set of Members who had been actively engaging in terms of posing questions to others.

2.40. During these consultations, one common comment heard from all groups was that the CoA had been one of the better functioning Committees in the house and that the Secretariat had been providing valuable assistance in this regard.

2.41. A number of interesting suggestions were also made to enhance the CoA review process as well as possible improvements in the existing processes and data systems. The Secretariat took on board some of these suggestions, including identifying "nil" notifications in the reminder airgram, an early launch of Committee's Q&A process through the AG-IMS and the organization of an information sessions for the Geneva-based delegates on the functioning of the CoA.

2.42. The Chair also indicated that she would convene another round of consultations at a later stage.

2.43. Commenting on the report, Norway acknowledged a positive development in the Committee's review process by referring to the room document<sup>21</sup> listing the number of responses received before the Committee meeting. Norway iterated that early responses to the questions raised during the review process would facilitate an informed discussion among Members, especially in enabling follow up comments.

## **2.6 Annual report to the Council for Trade in Goods**

2.44. The Chairperson noted that as per the regular practice, a brief and factual report for the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG) would be produced reflecting the activities of the Committee on Agriculture, including the three Committee meetings held in 2019. A draft version of the report had been circulated before the meeting to facilitate Members' consideration. The final report was distributed as G/L/1332.

## **2.7 Observer Organizations**

### **2.7.1 Renewal of IICA ad hoc observer status**

2.45. The Chairperson recalled that at its March 2012 meeting, the Committee had agreed to invite IICA to its regular meetings as an *ad hoc* observer on an annual basis in order to expedite procedures unless the issue was to be specifically placed on the agenda by a Member in the intervening meetings. IICA had accordingly been invited to participate in the Committee's regular meetings since 2012.

2.46. The Committee agreed to invite IICA as an *ad hoc* observer to participate in the formal meetings of the Committee in 2020.

## **2.8 Other business**

### **2.8.1 Launch of the on-line agriculture notification system**

2.47. The Chairperson reminded the Committee of the Secretariat's efforts in enhancing the various on-line systems including the development of a web-based notification system. The Chairperson noted that the October meeting marked the launch of the online agriculture notification system.

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<sup>21</sup> RD/AG/73.

2.48. The Secretariat provided further details and insights on the operation and functioning of the online notification system. In doing so, the Secretariat recalled the background of the project that had begun in March 2009 in response to a letter by the then General Council Chair circulated to Chairs of all WTO Committees and Councils to consult with Members on ways to enhance transparency and improved notifications. A Work Programme was accordingly established by the CoA which targeted an improvement of timeliness and completeness of notifications.<sup>22</sup> In addition, a survey was conducted where all Members were given the opportunity to express challenges and concerns faced in the notification process. A number of actions were taken by the Committee that included streamlining of documents and discussions on best practices.<sup>23</sup> The Secretariat also noted certain actions that it had taken pursuant to the 2009 work programme, including the preparation of a *Handbook on Notification Requirements under the Agreement on Agriculture*;<sup>24</sup> regular organization of Geneva based *Annual Notification Workshops*; and revamping of the WTO Agriculture webpage. In 2013, the Agriculture Information Management System (AG-IMS) was launched dedicated to the questions and answers (Q&A) raised in the Review Process and in 2014, the work was initiated on an online notification system. The online agriculture notification system involved questions of high technical complexity and the project took some five years for completion. In April 2019, a pilot group was formed to test the functioning of the on-line notification system. The Secretariat thanked the participants of the pilot group for their comments and useful suggestions towards the improvement of the online system.

2.49. The Secretariat also highlighted the features of the new online notification system which included automatic access to Members' Scheduled Commitments sourced from the CTS; automatic calculations (for market price support, Total AMS, SSG triggers, etc); replication of formats in G/AG/2 along with the possibility to accommodate voluntary transparency practices and additional information provided by Members in their notifications. In addition, the new system would facilitate consistency and comparability of Members' notifications by way of an enhanced harmonization of their notification practices. With respect to the operational and procedural aspects, the Secretariat informed Members that the notification could be prepared either through the web-based screens or using the offline Excel/Word templates available in the three WTO official languages. An email acknowledgement confirming the submission of notification would be sent to the notifying Members. Furthermore, the data from the notifications would be searchable online after the distribution of notifications. The Secretariat highlighted that the system included explanatory notes, manuals and demo videos for reference and guidance. Furthermore, the programme of the Secretariat's notification workshops would include hands-on training on the use of the notification system. In addition, upon specific requests, training sessions could be organized for the capital-based notification experts. For any technical assistance, the Secretariat could be contacted on [agims@wto.org](mailto:agims@wto.org). Lastly, the Secretariat reminded Members of an information session scheduled on 2 December 2019 that would provide more information on the system.

### 2.8.2 AG-IMS Q&A database improvements

2.50. The Secretariat informed the Committee that it had started work on improvements to the Q&A function of the AG IMS. Among the new features currently being developed were:

- a. The system would allow Members the possibility to link Article 18.6 follow-up questions to the specific implementation matters raised previously under this provision;
- b. Users would be able to identify repeated questions;
- c. Responding Members would be able to revise previously submitted responses. In such cases, the questioning Member would be notified;
- d. The system would also provide for easy identification of outstanding responses;
- e. Another set of new features would include user friendly rich text, and the possibility to include graphs and pictures in questions and responses;

<sup>22</sup> G/AG/R/54, paras 72-73 refer.

<sup>23</sup> G/AG/W/73; G/AG/W/73/Rev.1; G/AG/W/73/Rev.1/Corr.1; G/AG/W/73/Rev.1/Add.1; G/AG/W/73/Rev.2; G/AG/W/73/Rev.2/Add.1.

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/agric\\_e/ag\\_notif\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/ag_notif_e.pdf)

- f. Based on comments received from Members, the Secretariat was also looking at the feasibility of a feature where a Member could express interest in a particular question raised by another Member which would then allow that Member to receive notifications when a response is submitted or updated in respect of that question; and
- g. Part of the new features for the Secretariat also included the generation of automatic reminders to Members with outstanding responses.

2.51. The Secretariat expected that most of these improvements would be released to Members by the end of 2019.

2.52. The European Union thanked the Secretariat for its efforts to enhance the functionalities of the online transparency tools and requested the Secretariat to have a system in place to ensure that Members who had registered their intention to provide a response in the AG IMS, eventually did so. The Secretariat noted that the system would alert Members with outstanding responses.

2.53. Ukraine also welcomed the proposed AG-IMS improvements and thanked the Secretariat for the follow-up on Ukraine's earlier proposal on the tracking of historical questions.

### **2.8.3 Notification workshops in 2020**

2.54. The Secretariat informed Members that the next Geneva-based notification workshop would take place on 6-10 July 2020. A total of approximately thirty government officials from developing countries would be selected for funded participation, with the possibility of five self-funded participants (including Geneva-based delegates) to attend the workshop. The workshop would address the requirements and formats of agriculture notifications, the importance of transparency and the review process of the Committee on Agriculture. Participants would also be able to prepare notifications through the new online notification system. An invitation letter with details on the selection process would be sent to Members in the first months of 2020. The Secretariat reminded Members that national workshops on agriculture notifications could be requested via the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC) of the WTO ([https://wto.formstack.com/forms/national ta requests](https://wto.formstack.com/forms/national_ta_requests)).

### **2.8.4 Date of next regular meetings**

2.55. The Chairperson proposed that the ninety-third (93<sup>rd</sup>) regular meeting of the Committee on Agriculture be held on 24-25 March 2020. On this basis, the airgram convening the meeting would be issued on 13 March 2020.

## ANNEX

The Annex includes the full list of questions raised under various agenda items of the Committee. Members' responses and follow-up exchanges (if applicable) can be accessed through the AG-IMS (<http://agims.wto.org/>) by selecting the function "Search Q&A Submitted Since 1995" and inputting the ID number of the question concerned. Question IDs where replies were yet to be submitted into the AG-IMS as of 28 November 2019 have been identified with the symbol "\*". Members are invited to provide outstanding replies through the AG-IMS at the earliest opportunity.

**Table 1- Specific Implementation Matters (Article 18.6)**

| <b>Specific Implementation Matter</b>                      | <b>Question by</b>       | <b>ID Number</b> |
|--|--------------------------|------------------|
| Angola's fuel subsidies                                    | Ukraine                  | 92087*           |
| Angola's potential import restrictions                     | Canada                   | 92045*           |
| Brazil's wheat quota                                       | Canada                   | 92046            |
| Canada's compensation for farmers after trade concessions  | Australia                | 92127            |
|  | New Zealand              | 92075            |
|  | New Zealand              | 92077            |
|  | United States of America | 92001            |
| Canada's New Milk Ingredient Class                         | Australia                | 92126            |
|  | New Zealand              | 92076            |
|  | New Zealand              | 92078            |
|  | United States of America | 92002            |
| Canada's review of the TRQ system                          | Australia                | 92088            |
| Canada's wine sale policy                                  | United States of America | 92003            |
| China's rice policies                                      | United States of America | 92005*           |
| China's state reserves programmes                          | Canada                   | 92047*           |
| China's state trading enterprises                          | United States of America | 92004*           |
| EU's European Court of Auditors report                     | Brazil                   | 92093            |
| EU's Modification of agricultural schedule of commitments  | Australia                | 92091            |
| EU's compensation for farmers to adjust to new trade deals | Australia                | 92089            |
| EU's Eco schemes payments                                  | Brazil                   | 92092            |
| EU's intervention policy                                   | Australia                | 92128*           |
|  | New Zealand              | 92080            |
|  | United States of America | 92006            |
| EU's planned policy measures against U.S. tariffs          | Australia                | 92090            |
| EU's support package to Irish beef farmers                 | New Zealand              | 92079            |
| EU's statement regarding the EU-28 draft Schedule          | European Union           | 92129            |
| India's dairy Loans  | United States of America | 92011            |
| India's National Dairy Plan Phase I                        | United States of America | 92012            |
| India's pulses policies                                    | Russian Federation       | 92096            |
|  | United States of America | 92008            |
|  | Australia                | 92094            |
|  | Canada                   | 92049            |
| India's short-term crop loans                              | United States of America | 92010            |

| Specific Implementation Matter   | Question by              | ID Number |
|--|--------------------------|-----------|
| India's sugar policies   | European Union           | 92007     |
|  | Canada                   | 92048     |
| India's support to rice exports  | United States of America | 92013     |
| India's Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA)                               | Australia                | 92095     |
| India's wheat public stockpiling   | United States of America | 92009     |
| Indonesia's Measure 18 in DS477 and DS478                                      | New Zealand              | 92081     |
| Japan's corn policies  | Australia                | 92097     |
| Mongolia's quota regime for importation  | Russian Federation       | 92098     |
| Philippines' rice waiver   | Japan                    | 92099     |
|  | Thailand                 | 92100     |
| Russia's state programme for rural territories development                     | European Union           | 92017     |
| Russia's excise duties on wine and champagne                                   | European Union           | 92121     |
| Switzerland's "Loi Chocolatier"  | European Union           | 92018     |
| Switzerland's Financing of security stocks in agricultural sectors             | European Union           | 92019     |
| Thailand's support to rice and palm oil  | United States of America | 92014     |
|  | United States of America | 92015     |
| The EU's coupled payments  | India                    | 92071     |
| U.S. biofuel policies  | Ukraine                  | 92103     |
| U.S. farm support  | Canada                   | 92050     |
|  | European Union           | 92020     |
| U.S. practices of DS notifications   | China                    | 92086     |
| U.S. Proposed domestic support measures  | Australia                | 92102     |
|  | New Zealand              | 92082     |
|  | India                    | 92072     |
| U.S. support to cotton sector  | India                    | 92073     |
| United Kingdom - Modification of the EU's agricultural schedule of commitments | Australia                | 92101*    |

**Table 2- Questions raised in connection with individual notifications**

| Notification Number                                  | Question by              | Answer by | Notification Format | Keywords                                     | ID Number |
|--|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|--|-----------|
| G/AG/N/ECU/50  | Brazil                   | Ecuador   | MA:1                | Transparency issues                          | 92104     |
| G/AG/N/ECU/50  | Russian Federation       | Ecuador   | MA:1                | Allocation of licences to importing entities | 92105     |
| G/AG/N/ECU/50  | United States of America | Ecuador   | MA:1                | Allocation of licences to importing entities | 92016     |
| G/AG/N/THA/101,<br>G/AG/N/THA/102,<br>G/AG/N/THA/103 | United States of America | Thailand  | MA:1                | Transparency issues                          | 92021     |
| G/AG/N/THA/103                                       | Russian Federation       | Thailand  | MA:1                | Allocation of licences to importing entities | 92106     |
| G/AG/N/AUS/125                                       | India                    | Australia | MA:2                | Transparency issues                          | 92074     |
| G/AG/N/IND/16,<br>G/AG/N/IND/17                      | Australia                | India     | MA:2                | Transparency issues                          | 92107     |
| G/AG/N/IND/16,<br>G/AG/N/IND/17                      | Brazil                   | India     | MA:2                | Transparency issues                          | 92108     |

| Notification Number                                  | Question by              | Answer by           | Notification Format | Keywords   | ID Number          |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------|
| G/AG/N/IND/16,<br>G/AG/N/IND/17                      | Ukraine                  | India               | MA:2                | Transparency issues  | 92109              |
| G/AG/N/IND/16,<br>G/AG/N/IND/17                      | United States of America | India               | MA:2                | Transparency issues  | 92022              |
| G/AG/N/THA/104,<br>G/AG/N/THA/105,<br>G/AG/N/THA/106 | Russian Federation       | Thailand            | MA:2                | Tariff quota fill  | 92110              |
| G/AG/N/THA/104,<br>G/AG/N/THA/105,<br>G/AG/N/THA/106 | Ukraine                  | Thailand            | MA:2                | Tariff quota fill  | 92111              |
| G/AG/N/THA/106                                       | Australia                | Thailand            | MA:2                | Transparency issues  | 92113              |
| G/AG/N/THA/106                                       | Australia                | Thailand            | MA:2                | Tariff quota fill  | 92112              |
| G/AG/N/TPKM/180,<br>G/AG/N/TPKM/182                  | Thailand                 | Chinese Taipei      | MA:3                | Trigger calculations   | 92114*             |
| G/AG/N/EU/56   | Brazil                   | European Union      | MA:5                | Transparency issues  | 92115              |
| G/AG/N/ARG/43  | Canada                   | Argentina           | DS:1                | General services: extension and advisory services                                  | 92051              |
| G/AG/N/ARG/44,<br>G/AG/N/ARG/45                      | Canada                   | Argentina           | DS:1                | General services: training services  | 92052              |
| G/AG/N/ARG/44,<br>G/AG/N/ARG/45                      | Canada                   | Argentina           | DS:1                | Other product-specific AMS/EMS   | 92054              |
| G/AG/N/ARG/44,<br>G/AG/N/ARG/45                      | Canada                   | Argentina           | DS:1                | Non-product-specific AMS   | 92053              |
| G/AG/N/BHR/11  | European Union           | Bahrain, Kingdom of | DS:1                | Article 6.2 (Special and Differential Treatment/Development Programmes)            | 92033*             |
| G/AG/N/CHL/55,<br>G/AG/N/CHL/56                      | Canada                   | Chile               | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)   | 92055*             |
| G/AG/N/CHN/42,<br>G/AG/N/CHN/43,<br>G/AG/N/CHN/44    | Canada                   | China               | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)   | 92056*             |
| G/AG/N/TPKM/181                                      | European Union           | Chinese Taipei      | DS:1                | Direct payments: payments for relief from natural disasters                        | 92034*             |
| G/AG/N/TPKM/181                                      | European Union           | Chinese Taipei      | DS:1                | Market price support   | 92035*             |
| G/AG/N/TPKM/181                                      | Brazil                   | Chinese Taipei      | DS:1                | Other product-specific AMS/EMS   | 92116*             |
| G/AG/N/TPKM/181                                      | Canada                   | Chinese Taipei      | DS:1                | Other product-specific AMS/EMS   | 92057*             |
| G/AG/N/CUB/62  | Canada                   | Cuba                | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)   | 92058              |
| G/AG/N/EU/46   | Canada                   | European Union      | DS:1                | Direct payments: payments under environmental programmes                           | 92059              |
| G/AG/N/IND/13  | United States of America | India               | DS:1                | Classification of measures   | 92023              |
| G/AG/N/IND/15  | United States of America | India               | DS:1                | Direct payments: structural adjustment assistance provided through investment aids | 92025              |
| G/AG/N/IND/15  | United States of America | India               | DS:1                | <i>De minimis</i>  | 92024              |
| G/AG/N/KGZ/6   | United States of America | Kyrgyz Republic     | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)   | 92026              |
| G/AG/N/KGZ/6,<br>G/AG/N/KGZ/7                        | Canada                   | Kyrgyz Republic     | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)   | 92060 <sup>1</sup> |
| G/AG/N/KGZ/7   | United States of America | Kyrgyz Republic     | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)   | 92027              |

<sup>1</sup> The question raised under the AG-IMS ID 92060 was erroneously omitted from the compilation of questions contained in the document G/AG/W/202.



| Notification Number                               | Question by              | Answer by                | Notification Format | Keywords  | ID Number |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---|-----------|
| G/AG/N/NGA/17                                     | Australia                | Nigeria                  | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)                              | 92117*    |
| G/AG/N/OMN/21,<br>G/AG/N/OMN/22,<br>G/AG/N/OMN/23 | United States of America | Oman                     | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)                              | 92028     |
| G/AG/N/OMN/22                                     | Canada                   | Oman                     | DS:1                | Investment subsidies generally available to agriculture                 | 92061     |
| G/AG/N/OMN/25                                     | Australia                | Oman                     | DS:1                | General services: infrastructural services                              | 92118     |
| G/AG/N/OMN/25                                     | European Union           | Oman                     | DS:1                | Article 6.2 (Special and Differential Treatment/Development Programmes) | 92036     |
| G/AG/N/OMN/25                                     | European Union           | Oman                     | DS:1                | Investment subsidies generally available to agriculture                 | 92037     |
| G/AG/N/PAN/50                                     | Canada                   | Panama                   | DS:1                | Other product-specific AMS/EMS  | 92062     |
| G/AG/N/PER/19,<br>G/AG/N/PER/20,<br>G/AG/N/PER/21 | Canada                   | Peru                     | DS:1                | General services: research  | 92063     |
| G/AG/N/RUS/24                                     | Canada                   | Russian Federation       | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)                              | 92064*    |
| G/AG/N/RUS/24                                     | European Union           | Russian Federation       | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)                              | 92038*    |
| G/AG/N/RUS/24                                     | Australia                | Russian Federation       | DS:1                | Other product-specific AMS/EMS  | 92119     |
| G/AG/N/SYC/4                                      | Canada                   | Seychelles               | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)                              | 92065*    |
| G/AG/N/SYC/4                                      | Canada                   | Seychelles               | DS:1                | Investment subsidies generally available to agriculture                 | 92066*    |
| G/AG/N/SGP/32                                     | Australia                | Singapore                | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)                              | 92120*    |
| G/AG/N/TJK/1,<br>G/AG/N/TJK/6                     | Canada                   | Tajikistan               | DS:1                | Transparency issues (including Table DS:2)                              | 92067*    |
| G/AG/N/CHN/49                                     | Canada                   | China                    | DS:2                | Payments based on fixed areas or yields                                 | 92070*    |
| G/AG/N/NOR/103                                    | New Zealand              | Norway                   | DS:2                | Payments based on 85% or less of the base level of production           | 92083     |
| G/AG/N/KOR/65,<br>G/AG/N/KOR/66,<br>G/AG/N/KOR/67 | European Union           | Korea, Republic of       | ES:1                | Special and differential treatment (Article 9.4)                        | 92039     |
| G/AG/N/KOR/65,<br>G/AG/N/KOR/66,<br>G/AG/N/KOR/67 | Ukraine                  | Korea, Republic of       | ES:1                | Special and differential treatment (Article 9.4)                        | 92122     |
| G/AG/N/MEX/39/Rev.1,<br>G/AG/N/MEX/44/Rev.1       | Brazil                   | Mexico                   | ES:1                | Transparency issues   | 92123     |
| G/AG/N/MYN/20                                     | Australia                | Myanmar                  | ES:1                |   | 92124*    |
| G/AG/N/USA/126,<br>G/AG/N/USA/118                 | New Zealand              | United States of America | ES: 1; ES:2         | Quantity of total exports   | 92084     |
| G/AG/N/USA/127                                    | Australia                | United States of America | ES:3                | International food aid  | 92125     |
| G/AG/N/USA/127                                    | China                    | United States of America | ES:3                | International food aid  | 92085     |

**Table 3- Questions raised under agenda item "Overdue notifications"**

| <b>Question by</b>       | <b>Answer by</b> | <b>ID Number</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| United States of America | China            | 92029*           |
| United States of America | India            | 92030            |
| European Union           | Kazakhstan       | 92040            |
| European Union           | Morocco          | 92041*           |
| Canada                   | Turkey           | 92068            |
| Canada                   | Turkey           | 92069            |
| European Union           | Turkey           | 92042            |
| European Union           | Viet Nam         | 92043            |

**Table 4- Questions raised in connection to the monitoring of the Export Competition Decision**

| <b>Question by</b>       | <b>Answer by</b>   | <b>ID Number</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| United States of America | China              | 92031            |
| European Union           | Russian Federation | 92044            |
| United States of America | Russian Federation | 92032            |