



Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PROCEDURE TO MONITOR THE PROCESS
OF INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION**

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT¹

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. At its meeting of 15-16 October 1997, the SPS Committee adopted a provisional procedure to monitor the process of international harmonization and the use of international standards, guidelines or recommendations, as provided for in Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement. The Committee extended the provisional monitoring procedure in 1999, 2001, and 2003, and revised the procedure in October 2004.² In 2006, the Committee agreed to extend the provisional procedure indefinitely, and to review its operation as an integral part of the periodic review of the operation and implementation of the Agreement under Article 12.7.³ This procedure was reviewed as part of the Third Review of the Agreement⁴, and again in 2014/2015 in the context of the Fourth Review.⁵

1.2. The Committee has previously considered sixteen annual reports on the monitoring procedure.⁶ These reports summarize several standards-related issues that the Committee has considered and the responses received from the relevant standard-setting organizations.

2 PROPOSED REVISION TO THE MONITORING PROCEDURE (G/SPS/W/268)

2.1. Since the Committee's consideration of the 2014 Annual Report, there have been no proposed revisions to the monitoring procedure.

3 NEW ISSUES

3.1. During the March 2015 Committee meeting the United States reminded Members about the OIE guidelines on imports of live poultry and poultry products (including heat-treated/cooked products) related to avian influenza, including highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The guidelines made clear that when HPAI was detected only in wild birds, OIE members should not impose bans on trade in poultry commodities. The guidelines also clearly established provisions for the recognition of zones or regions free of the disease. The affected country should define the control zones based on its response efforts, and the remainder of the country outside of those control zones could continue to be considered disease free. Additionally, heat-treated poultry products (meat, liquid eggs, rendered meals, etc.) that had been heat-processed to destroy the HPAI virus in accordance with OIE guidelines were safe to trade irrespective of whether the products came from an area where HPAI had been detected. The United States called upon its trading partners to lift any import restrictions on live poultry and poultry products (including heat-treated products) from the United States that were not consistent with the OIE guidelines.

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

² G/SPS/14, G/SPS/17, G/SPS/25 and G/SPS/11/Rev.1.

³ G/SPS/40.

⁴ G/SPS/53.

⁵ The draft report of the Fourth Review is contained in document G/SPS/W/280/Rev.2.

⁶ These were circulated as G/SPS/13, G/SPS/16, G/SPS/18, G/SPS/21, G/SPS/28, G/SPS/31, G/SPS/37, G/SPS/42, G/SPS/45, G/SPS/49, G/SPS/51, G/SPS/54, G/SPS/56, G/SPS/59, G/SPS/60 and G/SPS/GEN/1332.

3.2. The European Union shared the US concern and supported the removal of import restrictions with relation to HPAI that were not in line with international standards. Canada noted that the OIE provided effective guidance around the principle of zoning and encouraged all Members to recognize zones established by affected Members, in accordance with this guidance.

4 PREVIOUS ISSUES

4.1. No Member raised any issues under this agenda item.

5 RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM THE RELEVANT STANDARD-SETTING ORGANIZATIONS

5.1. There have been no responses received from the relevant standard-setting organizations since the last annual report.
