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**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**SPS COMMITTEE THEMATIC SESSION ON RISK COMMUNICATION  
WEDNESDAY, 15 JULY 2015  
WTO, CENTRE WILLIAM RAPPARD, GENEVA**

PROGRAMME

The SPS Committee agreed, at its March 2015 meeting, to hold a thematic session on risk communication immediately preceding its July 2015 meeting, based on a proposal submitted by the United States.<sup>1</sup> The session would offer an opportunity for Members and relevant international organizations to share experiences and lessons learned in relation to risk communication strategies in the SPS area.

On this basis, the WTO Secretariat is organizing a thematic session on risk communication to be held in Geneva, Switzerland on Wednesday, 15 July 2015, beginning at 10 a.m.

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**10:00–10:15**

**1. Importance of risk communication and its contribution to the operation of the SPS Committee and Members' implementation of the SPS Agreement**

*Speaker:* Ms Gretchen Stanton, Senior Counsellor, WTO Secretariat

**10:15–11:30**

**2. Frameworks and guidance in the area of risk communication**

A panel of speakers will address the existing frameworks and guidance related to risk communication. Focus will be placed on the relevant international standards, as well as issues linked to: identifying the audience and their communication needs; translating the risk assessment and risk management into communication messages; improving communication between risk assessors and risk managers; communicating uncertainty; and methods to support risk communication, including the role of technology.

*Panel:*

- **Mr Tom Heilandt**, Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
- **Ms Sonya Hammons**, Capacity Development Programme Officer, International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
- **Dr Derek Belton**, Head, International Trade Department, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)
- **Dr Andrijana Rajic**, Food Safety Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- **Mr Eric Bolaños**, Agricultural Health and Food Safety Specialist, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

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<sup>1</sup> G/SPS/GEN/1401, which focused on possible next steps following the workshop on risk analysis held in October 2014.

- **Professor William Hallman**, Rutgers University, Chair of the US FDA's Risk Communication Advisory Committee

**11:30–12:50**

### **3. Practical experiences and lessons learned related to the risk communication strategies employed in response to specific SPS issues**

Areas of focus in this session will include: tailoring risk communication strategies to specific SPS challenges; projecting and instilling confidence in science-based risk analysis as a basis for "successful risk communication"; and identifying barriers that must be overcome in implementing a successful and targeted communication strategy. Presenters will be invited to answer the following questions:

- How did you obtain the information that was communicated?
- How did you know what the audience needed/wanted to hear?
- How was uncertainty communicated?
- What lessons were learned?

*Speakers:*

- **Dr Frans Verstraete**, Head of Unit in the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission  
*"Effective risk communication for maintaining/restoring consumer confidence: Experiences from recent contamination events in the EU"*
- **Dr Christopher R. Braden**, Director, Division of Foodborne, Waterborne and Environmental Diseases, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
*"CDC's experience: A case study of communications during a foodborne outbreak response"*
- **Dr Lisa Indar**, Programme Manager, Tourism and Health Programme - Surveillance, Disease Prevention & Control Division, Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)  
*"Risk communication for health and food safety: The Caribbean experience"*
- **Dr Margareth de Lara Capurro-Guimarães**, Associate Professor, Department of Parasitology, Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil  
*"Brazil's experience: Risk communication plan for genetically engineered mosquitoes"*

**12:50–13:00**

### **4. Conclusion and next steps**

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