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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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PROCEDURE TO MONITOR THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION

SUBMISSION BY NEW ZEALAND

The following document, received on 22 February 2021, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of New Zealand.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. We note the New Zealand paper [G/SPS/GEN/1851](#), submitted to the SPS Committee meeting in November 2020, which highlighted the renewed interest of the international standards bodies in the implementation of Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement. These Articles envisage that the SPS Committee "shall develop a procedure to monitor the process on international harmonization and coordinate efforts with the relevant international organizations". The discussions currently occurring in the ISSBs are specifically around the use, implementation and impact of their standards on trade and how best to monitor this process.

2 PROPOSAL

2.1. New Zealand believe there are various avenues to assist the International Standard Setting Bodies (ISSBs) in more effectively monitoring the use of the implementation of international standards as laid out in Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement.

2.2. Initially New Zealand suggested the WTO Secretariat invite Members and the ISSBs to propose ideas and suggestions for the best approach to explore these provisions.

2.3. In addition, New Zealand would like the SPS Committee to consider the following ideas:

- A Thematic Session on Articles 3.5 and 12.4 of the SPS Agreement and initiatives of ISSBs in relation to international harmonization;
- Reviewing (in consultation with the ISSBs) the notification template to gather more specific information on international harmonization and ensure that useful data can be extracted from the WTO/SPS National Notification System. In addition, discuss with the ISSBs what previous analysis may have been done to date;
- A review/analysis of Specific Trade Concerns (STCs) highlighting the themes and evidence of harmonization to ISSB standards;
- SPS Committee receive annual report from the ISSBs on their efforts to support implementation among their members, of adopted standards, and any common challenges that may be faced;
- Annual discussion platform for Members to make voluntary statements to the SPS Committee highlighting how they are contributing to harmonizing with international standards with examples or case studies of how they have based their sanitary or phytosanitary measures on international standards, guidelines or recommendations. Statements provided would provide a snapshot of national approaches to harmonization with international standards. A statement template could be developed to provide Members

guidance on content, and ensure the information provided can be reported on in a consistent and useful format;

- Relating specifically to Article 12.4, which reads "The Committee shall develop a procedure to monitor the process of international harmonization and the use of international standards, guidelines or recommendations. For this purpose, the Committee should, in conjunction with the relevant international organizations, establish a list of international standards, guidelines or recommendations relating to sanitary or phytosanitary measures which the Committee determines to have a major trade impact..."; review the list of international standards, guidelines and recommendations relating to sanitary or phytosanitary measures which the Committee determines to have a major trade impact. Once the analysis has been undertaken, use the data to inform future proposals to monitor the use of the international standards.
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