WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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COMMUNICATION FROM ISO
(REPORT OF ACTIVITIES)

The following communication, received on 23 June 2014, is being circulated at the request of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

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The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has prepared this information paper as part of ongoing updates and communication between the SPS Committee and the ISO Central Secretariat. It provides a summary of current work undertaken by ISO that may be of interest to members of the WTO SPS Committee and is intended to support and enhance dialogue and coordination between the two organizations.

Any general information regarding the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) can be found on http://www.iso.org/. ISO counts more than 20,000 International Standards, 230 technical committees and 488 subcommittees managing some 2,686 working groups.

1 ISO'S INTERNATIONAL STATUS

1.1. ISO has a specific status with many UN agencies, including the WHO and FAO. It is also an observer at the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE), the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO TBT), the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and also at the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). ISO entered into a liaison relationship with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

1.2. ISO organized a regional workshop on the Role of International Food Standards in international trade on 22 and 23 April 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand with the support of the Thai Industrial Standards Institute (TISI) together with the cooperation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) with support from the Swedish international development cooperation agency (Sida). Among the 56 participants in this regional workshop, 40 individuals (representatives of national standards institutes, government and industry) came from 14 countries in East and South East Asia.

1.3. This workshop offered the opportunity to have an overview of the region's food supply chains, expose the linkages and differences among the various international players, and review the challenges, opportunities and solutions that a coherent implementation of standards and practices can provide. This event focused on raising awareness and building capacity of a cadre of individuals in the region. These individuals are expected to carry the lessons learned from the workshop to their respective national groups, to inform their National Standard Bodies and their stakeholders about work done at ISO/TC 34 and potential engagement in technical work (e.g. involving producers, workers, inspectors, testing laboratories, transporters, food chain professionals, export promotion agencies, storage and freight forwarders). The workshop was followed by the ISO/TC 34, *Food products* plenary meeting.

2 ISO AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

2.1. ISO/DEVCO, the policy development committee that deals specifically with the needs of developing countries in ISO, assists developing countries to focus both on acquiring world-class technological competence and on achieving a good understanding of the technical requirements underlying global trade. DEVCO's membership comprises 153 national standards institutes from industrialized as well as developing countries. (Find out more about DEVCO on http://www.iso.org/iso/home/about/iso-and-developing-countries.htm).

2.2. In 2013, ISO/DEVCO carried out three projects in relation to ISO 22000 technical assistance, and three events are planned in 2014 (see Annex 1). With the objective of improving awareness of key stakeholders in developing countries of the role of such standards in economic growth, world trade and their contribution to sustainable development, two national seminars on ISO 22000 were organized in Ecuador and Bolivia. Three other events were organized with the objective of building capacity: a regional workshop on Food Standards and Trade in Havana, Cuba, a regional workshop on the Role of International Food Standards in Trade in Bangkok, Thailand, both of them inviting other international organizations such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) to participate; and a national training of trainers seminar organized in Walvis Bay followed by a national seminar in Windhoek, Namibia. In addition, sponsorships are provided to individuals from developing countries to attend the meetings of ISO/TC 34/SC 17, *Management systems for food safety*; four sponsorships were provided for the meeting held on 4 8 November 2013 in Sydney, Australia, and five sponsorships are expected to be provided for the next meeting planned in Copenhagen, Denmark on 15-19 September 2014.

3 ISO TECHNICAL WORK UPDATES

3.1. The priority areas of mutual interest on which ISO would like to maintain and nurture dialogue with the SPS committee are the work of ISO/TC 34 on food products and the generic work of the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO).

4 ISO'S CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

4.1. The 29th plenary of the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO[1]) was hosted by the Standardization Administration of China (SAC) and the Certification and Accreditation Administration of China (CNCA) in Beijing, China, on 9 and 10 October 2013. It was attended by 106 delegates from 37 member bodies, 2 internal liaisons, 12 liaison bodies, including the IEC and 8 observers.

4.2. ISO/CASCO held an open day and round table discussions on conformity assessment in conjunction with the plenary. These sessions attracted more than 95 participants. The open day focused on the current work of ISO/CASCO working groups (WGs) and recently published standards. The round table discussions focused on future strategic issues facing ISO/CASCO and conformity assessment in general.

4.3. Having the ISO/CASCO plenary in China facilitated participation from the Asia Pacific region in the plenary and the workshop. The ISO committee for developing countries (DEVCO) sponsored the participation of a number of delegates from ISO Member Bodies in the region.

4.4. A regional workshop on the *Impact of Economic Globalization, Regulation and Consumer Safety on Conformity Assessment* was also held in conjunction with the plenary and was attended by over 110 delegates.

4.1 Topical issues currently being addressed in ISO/CASCO

- IAF-ILAC-ISO Joint Strategic group continues to monitor the implementation of their strategic action plan to ensure good conformity assessment in relation to management systems standards and to assist in protecting the ISO brand and image;

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[1] http://www.iso.org/iso/home/about/conformity-assessment.htm.

−   ISO/CASCO is in the process of completing an interactive online tool to promote a harmonized approach to conformity assessment based on the ISO/CASCO toolbox by national regulators. It is intended for use by the national member bodies together with national regulators. Two regional workshops are planned for 2014 in Oman and Botswana;

−   CASCO Strategic Alliance and Regulatory group (STAR) continues to attract and encourage intergovernmental agencies and industry sectors' interaction directly with ISO/CASCO. The membership continues to grow and this year the telecommunications industry (Quest Forum) joined the group. ISO/CASCO continues to promote the benefits of the toolbox to the STAR members and other participants. The format of the STAR is under review to even further facilitate participation and discussions;

−   ISO/CASCO is investigating various possibilities with regard to developing guidance and other deliverables on conformity assessment schemes. Guidance is already being finalized with regard to product certification schemes. It is intended to expand this to personnel and sector schemes in the coming 12 to 18 months;

−   ISO/CASCO continues exploring ways of ensuring adequate representation of stakeholders, industry, consumers and developing countries in ISO/CASCO activities, especially via the use of the WebEx for all of its meetings;

−   Together with COPOLCO, ISO/CASCO developed an information package for ISO member bodies and consumer organizations on the complaints' handling process for Management System Standards (MSSs) at national level. It facilitates their involvement in the resolution of complaints as they are in a position to alert local bodies where necessary;

−   ISO/CASCO completed its sixth year of managing the ISO *Survey of Certifications*. The 2012 survey results have been published on the ISO website and like for the 2011 Survey, are available free of charge on the ISO website (http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/certification/iso-survey.htm?certificate=ISO%209001&countrycode=AF). The results show an overall growth in the number of certificates globally.

4.2 ISO/CASCO membership and next plenary meeting

4.5. As of January 2014 ISO/CASCO has 122 members, including 77 Participating members and 45 Observing members.

4.6. The next ISO/CASCO plenary, workshop and associated meetings will be held the week of 22 September 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland.

4.7. More information about the scope and structure as well as a quick link to the work programme of ISO/CASCO (http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards_development/list_of_iso_technical_committees/iso_technical_committee.htm?commid=54998) is available on the ISO website.

5 ISO/TC 34 COOPERATION WITH CODEX, OIE AND OTHERS

5.1. There is a long history of collaboration between the Codex Committees and ISO/TC 34, *Food products*. ISO/TC 34 supports the establishment of an ongoing and sustainable framework for collaboration between Codex and ISO, in order to enhance the mutual coordination of work and the elimination of duplication and contradictions. This also includes interest to support any joint or collaborative communication on each others' work.

5.2. ISO's observer status to the CAC provides an opportunity for the coordination of issues related to a variety of ISO standards that are adopted and used by Codex in its work. ISO methods have been endorsed in the document "*Recommended methods of analysis and sampling*" (*CODEX STAN 234-1999*) which is updated each year during the CCMAS meeting.

5.3. Codex and ISO activities are complementary. Codex, as a governmental organization, prepares documents to assist governments in their statutory and regulatory work to protect their citizens from health hazards caused by food consumption. ISO, as a non-governmental organization, prepares standards in particular on test methods to assist stakeholders along the whole food chain to fulfil both the statutory and regulatory requirements, as well as the

requirements of consumers of these products. ISO/TC 34 also works on how to involve more developing countries in the works.

5.4. ISO/TC 34 held its last plenary meeting in April 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand following a regional workshop on the role of international food standards in international trade. The Codex Alimentarius representative and the OIE representative gave presentations at both the workshop and plenary meeting.

5.5. ISO/TC 34 will continue to offer its full support and cooperation to the Commission with a view to avoiding duplication of work and will adopt, for its own documents, the conclusions of the Commission on all matters concerning food hygiene requirements.

5.6. Annex 2 lists the projects that might be of interest to the SPS committee. It is to be noted that project ISO/TS 34700 *Animal welfare management — General requirements and guidance for organizations in the food supply chain*, is developed with the participation of OIE and other international organizations and is based on OIE codes.

5.7. A new handbook was published in May 2014 combining ISO/TS 22003, which contains the requirements for certification bodies that certify food safety management system complying with the requirements given in ISO 22000, with ISO/IEC 17021:2011, the standard that sets the generic requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems. More information can be found at:
http://www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/news_archive/news.htm?refid=Ref1852.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1. It is recognized that the SPS Committee's members, as governments, have the authority to regulate at the national level and that ISO, as a producer of voluntary International Standards, does not. In the framework of good regulatory practice, as promoted at international and regional levels, International Standards and Guides may be considered useful by regulators as effective and efficient tools to achieve important regulatory mandates, manage risk and address market confidence.

6.2. ISO considers that by using its International Standards, regulatory authorities will achieve their aims in public health and safety at less cost to manufacturers and consumers. Using International Standards also assists countries to meet their WTO TBT and SPS Agreement obligations.

6.3. For any further information on technical developments within ISO that have been reported in this paper, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Marie-Noëlle Bourquin at ISO Central Secretariat (bourquin@iso.org).

ANNEX 1

OVERVIEW OF ISO 22000 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS CARRIED OUT IN 2013 AND THOSE PLANNED FOR 2014

Objective 1: Improve awareness of key stakeholders in developing countries of the role of standardization in economic growth, world trade and sustainable development

Title	Venue/ Host	Dates	Total participants	Sponsored participants	Beneficiary countries
National seminar on ISO 22000 – Food safety management systems	Quito, Ecuador	26-28 June 2013	49	0	Ecuador
National seminar on ISO 22000 – Food safety management systems	La Paz, Bolivia, Plurinational State of	21-23 May 2014	50	0	Bolivia, Plurinational State of

Objective 2: Build capacity of ISO members and stakeholders involved in developing the standardization infrastructure and participating in international standardization work

Title	Venue/ Host	Dates	Total participants	Sponsored participants	Beneficiary countries
Regional workshop on Food Standards and Trade	Havana, Cuba	8-10 May 2013	69	46	Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Barbados; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Guatemala; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; Jamaica; Nicaragua; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; St. Lucia; Suriname; Trinidad and Tobago; Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of; and Uruguay

Title	Venue/ Host	Dates	Total participants	Sponsored participants	Beneficiary countries
National Training of Trainers seminar and follow-up seminars on ISO 22000 – *Food safety management systems*	Walvis Bay and Windhoek, Namibia	19-23 August (Training of trainers and seminar) and 24-25 September 2013 (Seminar)	15 in Training of trainers 105 in 2 follow-up seminars	0	Namibia
Sponsorships to plenary meeting of ISO/TC 34/ SC 17, *Management systems for food safety*	Sydney, Australia	4-8 November 2013	42	4	Colombia, Malaysia, Uruguay and Zimbabwe
Regional workshop on the Role of International Food Standards in Trade	Bangkok, Thailand	22-23 April 2014	40	18	Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Korea Dem. P. Rep. of, Lao People's Democratic Rep., Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam
Sponsorships to plenary meeting of ISO/TC 34/ SC 17, *Management systems for food safety*	Copenhagen, Denmark	15-19 September 2014	45	5	To be determined

ANNEX 2

SELECTED CURRENT ISO WORK ITEMS AND PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO SPS COMMITTEE
HAVING CHANGED STATUS DURING THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS (AS OF MAY 2014)

Project number	Title	Status
ISO/TS 22003:2013	*Food safety management systems — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems*	2nd edition published in December 2013
ISO 22004:2014	*Food safety management systems — Guidance on the application of ISO 22000*	To be published in September 2014
ISO 22000	*Food safety management systems — Requirements for any organization in the food chain*	Under systematic review. Revision will start in Sept. 2014
ISO/TS 22002-4:2013	*Prerequisite programmes on food safety — Part 4: Food packaging manufacturing*	Publication in December 2013
ISO/TS 22002-5	*Prerequisite programmes on food safety — Part 5: Transport and storage*	Under development
ISO/TS 22002-6	*Prerequisite programmes on food safety — Part 6: Feed production*	Under development
ISO/NP 19381	*Cocoa — Requirements for sustainability of cocoa*	Under development with CEN
ISO/NP 19382	*Cocoa — Requirements for traceability of cocoa*	Under development with CEN
ISO/NP 19383	*Cocoa — Requirements for bodies assessing conformity of sustainability and traceability of cocoa*	Under development with CEN
ISO/WD 19657	*Definition of criteria for a food ingredient to be considered as 'natural' — Guidelines on technical definitions and criteria for natural food ingredients*	Under development
ISO/WD TS 34700	*Animal welfare management — General requirements and guidance for organizations in the food supply chain*	Under development (with OIE participation and based on OIE codes)
ISO/AWI 19565	*Minimum requirements for the certification of products from sustainable marine fishery*	Under development (with FAO participation to be confirmed)
ISO/TS 22003:2013	*Food safety management systems — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems*	2nd edition published in December 2013

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