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**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**WTO DEFINITIONS OF THE TERM "TRADE FACILITATING"**

*Note by the Secretariat<sup>1</sup>*

1. At the SPS Committee meeting of 26-27 March 2015, the Committee requested that the Secretariat prepare a factual compilation of existing WTO definitions of the term "trade facilitating", which appears on the SPS notification format. The suggestion was made in the context of discussions related to a proposal for actions related to the fulfilment of transparency obligations (G/SPS/W/278) jointly submitted by Chile, the European Union, Morocco and Norway under the Fourth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement. A questionnaire on transparency (G/SPS/GEN/1382) had been circulated in February 2015, and the analysis of the replies to the questionnaire (G/SPS/GEN/1402) showed that many respondents were of the view that the term "trade facilitating" should be further defined.

2. There is no official WTO definition of the term "trade facilitating". Similarly, no official definition of the term "trade facilitation" has been adopted by WTO Members. However, the preamble of the new Trade Facilitation Agreement contains a statement of objectives that Members may consider useful.

*"Members,*

*[...]*

*Desiring to clarify and improve relevant aspects of Articles V, VIII and X of the GATT 1994 with a view to further expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit".*

Source: [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/tradfa\\_e/tradfa\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/tradfa_e.htm)

3. In addition, the glossary of WTO terms on the WTO website contains definitions prepared by the WTO Secretariat. This glossary includes the following definition<sup>2</sup>:

Trade facilitation

"Removing obstacles to the movement of goods across borders (e.g. simplification of customs procedures)."

Source: [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/glossary\\_e/glossary\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/glossary_e/glossary_e.htm)

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<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> On the WTO website, the following note appears next to the glossary: "This glossary is designed to help understanding some of the terms used in the WTO and in international trade. While every effort has been made to ensure that they are accurate, the definitions in this dictionary do not constitute authoritative interpretations of the legal texts of the WTO and are presented for illustrative purposes only. Nor is the glossary comprehensive."