



12 December 2017

(17-6835)

Page: 1/1

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

PRIVATE AND COMMERCIAL STANDARDS

FORMAL MEETING OF THE WTO/SPS COMMITTEE
2 NOVEMBER 2017

Communication from Belize

The following communication, received on 11 December 2017, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Belize.

1. The delegation of Belize takes this opportunity to inform Members that in February of this year, at the invitation of the organisers and with support from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), we were able to participate in the government to government meeting held in Houston, Texas.

2. Our brief intervention was on "Existing Models of Collaboration between Public and Private Sectors and the Risk of Obfuscating Roles in the Governance of Food Safety". We were thankful for the opportunity to share our experience and informed the audience that giving third party certification higher leverage than certification by competent authorities, results in the marginalization of competent authorities and the creation of parallel systems. In our view the private sector could play a complimentary role to that of the public sector but it should be on the basis of good practices and with regulatory oversight.

3. During the course of discussions, it appeared to us that some members have been able to successfully use these third party certification schemes to compliment the work of government in assuring the safety of food. However we were not clear on whether regulatory oversight was in place or how this was achieved.

4. Considering the fact that agenda Item 7 deals with "Private and Commercial Standards" – and it is a standing agenda item on this Committee, our delegation is of the view that much could be gained if similar discussions could be held here, perhaps during a workshop or thematic session, where members could volunteer to share their diverse perspectives and experiences.

5. We believe that a better understanding of the subject matter would help advance the work of this Committee on that agenda item. We therefore encourage Members to support such an event and to volunteer to share their diverse experiences on the topic.
