

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPS AGREEMENT  
THE EXPERIENCE OF THE EGYPTIAN PLANT QUARANTINE**

Information for the Workshop on 31 March 2006

Communication from Egypt

The following communication, received on 23 March 2006, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Egypt.

1. Trade in agricultural products is fast growing in a liberalized world trade system. Research and development are producing new plant varieties and strains. As a result, new pests are emerging and secondary pests have become primary in nature. Through its sanitary and phytosanitary measures, each country is trying to protect its plant resources against the entry of unrecorded pests.
2. The SPS Agreement introduces an important set of guidelines that govern trading practices at the international level. It sets out the rights and responsibilities of WTO Members that wish to take action to restrict imports in order to protect human, animal or plant life or health.
3. Plant quarantine laws and regulations must be dynamic, keeping a close eye on the research findings. With this in mind, Central Administration for Plant Quarantine (CAPQ) in Egypt has reviewed the corpus of laws, rules and regulations governing its work so as to ensure compliance with the international agreements and streamline its operation. This is also intended to increase transparency to all the stakeholders in the import/export business.
4. The purpose of this paper is to reflect the experience of the Egyptian Plant Quarantine in implementing the SPS Agreement. At the time it highlights some of the achievements of the Egyptian Plant Quarantine in the SPS field, the paper also ends with some recommendations based on practical experience.
5. **With regard to Article 6 of the SPS Agreement**, the CAPQ through the Potato Brown Rot Project (PBRP) and the effective technical assistance received in this field managed to establish a Pest Free Area (PFA), which has had a substantial impact on Egyptian potato exports to different Members' territories. In our view, this represents a good example of how technical assistance might help developing countries to overcome their problems.
6. **With regard to Article 5 of the SPS Agreement**, CAPQ successfully implemented a Pest Risk Assessment with one of the larger importers of Egyptian citrus. There are also ongoing negotiations with other countries under this article.

7. **With regard to Article 7 of the SPS Agreement**, and as a step for enhancing transparency, a number of notifications were published reflecting changes in national sanitary and phytosanitary measures and providing information on other measures.

8. Generally, the Egyptian Plant Quarantine has taken the following actions in order to better comply with and implement the SPS Agreement:

- (a) Cooperation with international organizations to increase awareness of international standards and guidelines.
- (b) Establishing SPS groups in all departments dealing with the implementation of the SPS Agreement.
- (c) Cooperation between all agricultural institutions and Geneva-based delegations.
- (d) Conducting bilateral discussion with trading partners to effectively implement provisions of the Agreement, seeking complete understanding of the rights and obligations of other Members.
- (e) Participating in all SPS activities and meetings.
- (f) Depending on scientific evidence and pest risk analysis for all national quarantine decisions.
- (g) Updating the Egyptian Quarantine legislation to be in a harmony with SPS rules.

9. **Recommendation:**

- (a) No restrictive quarantine measures should be taken against an exporting country without acceptable scientific evidence and/or a pest risk assessment.
  - (b) There should be balance between measures taken against the exporting country and the risk assessment. The measure should be to the extent necessary for protection and should be appropriate vis-à-vis the economic status of an exporting developing country.
  - (c) Egypt calls for the elimination of undue delays in the importing Member in any of the steps involved in recognition, and a decision on a specific accepted time frame to be implemented on an international basis.
  - (d) Egypt encourages mutual recognition between exporting and importing Members which would establish that the inspection and certification system of one country is equivalent to that of another providing the same protection.
-