

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY  
AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

Information for the Workshop on 31 March 2006

Communication from Cameroon

The following communication, received on 29 March 2006, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Cameroon.

- 
1. In preparation for the Workshop on the Implementation of the SPS Agreement, Members were asked to submit information on their experiences with respect to the subjects to be discussed.
  2. Cameroon's contribution will focus on the following points:
    - (a) Modalities for the implementation of the SPS Agreement;
    - (b) structure for the handling of SPS matters;
    - (c) system of information for economic operators and trading partners on the subject of SPS requirements;
    - (d) experience of Cameroon with the supply of and request for technical assistance;
    - (e) difficulties and proposals.
  - (a) **Modalities for the implementation of the SPS Agreement**
  3. On 26 September 1995, Cameroon ratified the Agreement Establishing the WTO. Since then, it has applied the rules of the multilateral trading system. Its domestic regulatory texts therefore seek to take account of the provisions of the WTO agreements. Thus, public opinion, the economic operators, society as a whole, and all of the various sectors of public life have been made increasingly aware of the agreements. This applies to the SPS Agreement as well.
  - (b) **Structure for handling SPS matters**
  4. Following the ratification of the Agreement Establishing the WTO, a decree was issued by the Prime Minister and Head of Government on 12 March 1997 establishing a National Technical

Committee to monitor the WTO Agreements. Its mission is:

- To establish an operational system for the continuing follow-up of the WTO agreements;
- to analyse and assess the impact of those agreements on the different sectors of the country's economy;
- to identify the problems that arise at the national and international levels;
- to propose appropriate solutions to the government with a view to defining and consolidating a concerted national position on the different areas covered by the agreements that are of particular interest to Cameroon;
- to monitor the implementation of the government's proposals in the framework of the international trade negotiations.

5. This Committee comprises representatives of:

- The government;
- the private sector;
- civil society.

The Chairperson of the Committee (Ministry of Commerce) may invite anyone to participate, without the right of discussion or vote, in the work of the Committee on the basis of their competence in the area under discussion.

6. Commissions or Sub-Committee's are to be created within the Committee to examine predefined issues.

7. In this connection, a Sub-Committee was set up within the Committee to examine SPS and TBT matters. A number of standards were developed within that Sub-Committee:

- Standards for wheat flour;
- standards for pasta of durum wheat semolina;
- standards for dairy products.

8. Cameroonian exporters are expected to comply with the few standards that have the force of law (standards on durum wheat meal semolina).

9. The Sub-Committee reviews the regulations on sanitary and phytosanitary inspection.

**(c) System of information for economic operators and trading partners on the subject of SPS requirements**

10. There are no specific measures for informing the Cameroonian economic operators of the new SPS requirements. The only channels used are the meetings that the Sub-Committee may hold, during which operators are informed of the measures that the State may take to protect human, animal and plant health.

11. As regards access for Cameroonian products to foreign markets, the Sub-Committee may have some information on certain markets, for example the regulations of the European Union, with respect to foodstuffs (hard control).

**(d) Experience of Cameroon with the supply of and request for technical assistance**

12. Cameroon often expresses its human capacity-building needs and notifies its requests to the WTO. In this connection, it requested a national week on the SPS and TBT Agreements. The WTO sent experts, who trained government and private sector officials and representatives of civil society. The results were deemed positive, and another training session was requested in 2004. The WTO sent an expert who carried out a needs assessment in June 2005. Cameroon is currently waiting for the WTO to validate the report of the expert so that the requested activity can take place.

**(e) Proposals**

13. Technical assistance plays an important role in the implementation of the WTO agreements. In order to benefit from the technical assistance offered, countries like Cameroon whose economies are in transition must submit specific requests.

14. It is therefore important that notifications of new requirements of WTO Members should reach the Ministry of Commerce in a timely manner so that the administration and business circles can be informed.

15. The WTO could, through the specialized agencies, help Cameroon in the development and certification of standards. This assistance could take the form of technological and infrastructural *equipment*.

16. Cameroon requests training for trainers in the SPS and TBT areas, so that the newly-trained officials can take over the retraining of economic operators and other officials.

---