

**SECOND REVIEW OF THE OPERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
AGREEMENT ON THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY
AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

Priority topics to be Taken into Account in the Future Work of the Committee

Communication from Colombia

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

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1. Colombia considers that in the second review of the operation and implementation of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, priority should be given to the relationship between the relevant international institutions (OIE, Codex Alimentarius and IPPC) and the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, since a stronger relationship gives more impetus to implementation of the WTO SPS Agreement, particularly as regards administrative procedures - technical and scientific procedures obviously being the domain of the above-mentioned international institutions. However, like these institutions, the SPS Committee cannot leave aside its own objectives and responsibilities, in the interests of each one addressing the matters within its competence.
 2. Colombia agrees that greater importance should be attached to the issue of "undue delays", since there is serious concern at the difficulties and the heavy economic losses caused by delays in the recognition of regions (as free of or with low prevalence of pests or diseases) by importing trading partners.
 3. It is important to examine the sanitary barriers imposed by importing countries, insofar as market access is subject to the completion of risk assessments. The latter depends on the exporting country's operational capacity, and in many cases a timely response is not possible.
 4. As to trade concerns, Colombia believes that these should have more room on the agenda of the SPS Committee, since the Committee is a forum that aims to serve as an instrument for solving problems arising in the course of trade between countries. Colombia realizes, however, that despite the attention paid to issues dealt with (over several meetings), an outcome satisfactory to both parties has not been reached, or the country imposing the standard has been unable to meet the requests of the country affected even where backed up by scientific evidence, and so prefers to resort to other measures envisaged in the Agreement.
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