

**PROPOSAL FOR PREVENTING UNDUE DELAYS IN THE ENTRY OF
ANIMALS, PLANTS AND THEIR PRODUCTS**

Communication from Colombia

The following communication, received on 14 June 2006, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Colombia.

A. BACKGROUND

1. Undue delays affect the trade principles and procedures set forth in paragraphs (a) and (b) of Annex C of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.
2. Undue delays occur most frequently in entry procedures for animals, plants and their products and are inconsistent with the provisions of the Agreement.
3. Several Member countries have expressed their views on this matter, including Uruguay, which in October 2004 submitted the document entitled "Undue Delays" (G/SPS/W/160) to the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.
4. The document submitted by Uruguay highlights the reasons for undue delays and indicates that, in terms of the entry of products, these include the risk assessments required for laying down specific product entry conditions, the taking of decisions regarding the recognition of equivalence and the establishment of control, inspection or approval procedures.
5. The issue of undue delays has been extensively discussed at this year's meetings of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Member countries were recently urged to submit proposals on the subject.

B. COLOMBIA'S PROPOSAL

6. For the above-mentioned reasons, Colombia would like to submit the following proposal on procedures to prevent undue delays.
 - (i) The exporting Member country must submit a formal request to the importing Member, making clear its interest in exporting animals, plants or their products.
 - (ii) Within a period not exceeding 30 days, the importing Member must provide the exporting Member with information detailing the steps to be taken and requirements

to be met for the product's entry into the country and indicating the approximate length of time required for each step.

- (iii) The exporting Member must send all the information required by the importing Member through the channels agreed upon by the parties or through those indicated by the importing Member.
 - (iv) When the process begins, the Member countries must notify the WTO of the situation.
 - (v) The importing Member may request further information on specific points whenever it deems necessary. Should additional information be required, the importing Member will inform the exporting Member of this need within a period of no more than 60 days following the date when the documents were initially received.
 - (vi) Should the importing Member require an on-site visit to the exporting Member, it must so inform the exporting Member and suggest a date for the visit.
 - (vii) The on-site visit must take place within a period of no more than three (3) months following due receipt of the information.
 - (viii) Once the risk assessment or procedures agreed upon by the parties have been carried out, the results must first be made known and discussed with the exporting country.
 - (ix) Once the procedures required by the importing country have been finalized, the latter will have a period of 30 days in which to inform the exporting country and the WTO of its decision and of the length of time needed to allow the entry of animals, plants and their products into its territory.
 - (x) Should the exporting Member's request be rejected, the importing country must provide the technical and scientific reasons for its decision.
-