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**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**PROPOSAL FOR A "MENTORING" SYSTEM OF ASSISTANCE  
RELATING TO THE TRANSPARENCY PROVISIONS OF THE SPS AGREEMENT**

Note by the Secretariat<sup>1</sup>

1. At the special Workshop on Transparency and at the subsequent meeting of the SPS Committee in October 2007, the Committee gave favourable consideration to a proposal by New Zealand for the establishment of a "mentoring" system to assist developing country Members in the operation of their SPS National Notification Authority (NNA) and their National Enquiry Point (NEP).<sup>2</sup> This document proposes a possible mechanism for the operation of such a system.
2. This voluntary procedure is being established with the objective of assisting Members, and in particular developing country Members, to implement their obligations with respect to the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement and to benefit as fully as possible from these provisions. Mentoring is the development of an informal, ad hoc supportive relationship between Officials with similar responsibilities, so as to provide the opportunity for an Official to seek advice and assistance from their counterpart in the NNA and/or NEP of another Member, based on that Official's knowledge and experience. Members who are willing to serve as Mentors would commit themselves to provide advice when requested on any practical issues which their partner Member may face with respect to the transparency provisions.
3. A Member who has offered to serve as a Mentor may provide support through, *inter alia*,:
  - (a) providing information and assistance via e-mail/phone on specific issues;
  - (b) procedural/operational guidance (for example, on how to adapt the recommended procedures when faced with a lack of computer access or lack of reliable internet, or when NEP and NNA responsibilities are split across government departments);
  - (c) legislative guidance;
  - (d) assistance with resources;
  - (e) assistance with translations;
  - (f) hands-on workshops; and
  - (g) in-house training.
4. This system does not imply any commitment to provide financial or other types of assistance, nor is it meant to replace other forms of technical assistance.<sup>3</sup> In light of the decision by the General

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<sup>1</sup> This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights or obligations under the WTO.

<sup>2</sup> See G/SPS/W/214, paragraphs 6 through 11, and G/SPS/R/47, paragraph 39.

<sup>3</sup> Members may identify specific technical assistance needs *inter alia* by responding to the Questionnaire on Technical Assistance (G/SPS/W/113).

Council regarding measures to assist small economies in meeting their obligations under the SPS Agreement<sup>4</sup>, Members may request that the mentoring assistance be provided via a relevant international secretariat.

5. Developed and developing country Members with experience in the operation of an SPS NNA and/or NEP are invited to volunteer to serve as Mentors. Likewise, any Member may indicate their interest in seeking the assistance of a relevant Official in another Member's NNA and/or NEP, based on that Official's knowledge and experience.

6. Members who are interested in participating in this procedure, either to provide assistance or to receive it, are invited to register with the WTO Secretariat. On the basis of the information provided, the Secretariat will seek to match those requesting assistance with those prepared to offer such assistance.

7. For this purpose, Members who would like to request assistance from another Member through the mentoring procedure are requested to complete Attachment 1 and to submit it to the Secretariat.

8. Those Members who are willing to provide mentoring assistance are requested to complete Attachment 2 and submit it to the Secretariat.

9. The information provided on the attachments will be used by the Secretariat to match Members requesting assistance with those offering to serve as Mentors, taking into account identified needs, expertise, working languages, and any other relevant constraints. Upon identification of a possible Mentor, the Secretariat will contact both Members concerned to ascertain their willingness and availability to develop a mentoring relationship. If both Members are in agreement, the Secretariat will provide to each of them the contact details of the other. It is for the Members involved to subsequently contact each other and establish the mentoring relationship.

10. The Secretariat will prepare an annual report on the functioning of the mentoring procedure. This will be based on the mentoring requests and offers registered and responses to a questionnaire by Members participating in the procedure.

11. In order to launch this mechanism, interested Members are invited to register with the Secretariat by submitting the relevant attachment by **15 May 2008** at the latest. Subsequently, the Secretariat will solicit requests and offers for mentoring assistance on an annual basis.

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<sup>4</sup> WT/COMTD/SE/5 and WT/COMTD/SE/W/16.

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**MEMBER REQUESTING ASSISTANCE**

1. Member:
2. Name of relevant Official:
3. Functional title/role of Official:

National Notification Authority ☐

National Enquiry Point ☐

Other (specify)

4. Type of assistance needed:

*(Be as specific as possible, e.g. development of an internal process to ensure that all relevant draft measures are notified in a timely manner; completion of notification formats; receipt and screening of notifications by other Members; circulation of notifications received to national stakeholders; preparation and submission of comments on notifications, establishment of a national website; raising awareness among stakeholders; development of a training programme, etc.)*

5. Preferred language(s):
6. Other working language(s):
7. Preferred contact means (check all that apply):

E-mail ☐

Fax ☐

Telephone ☐

8. Any other relevant information:

*(e.g. regions from which Member would prefer to receive assistance; constraints on receiving assistance from specific Members, duration of need for assistance, etc.)*

9. Full contact details of relevant Official:

Name:

Mailing address:

E-mail address:

Telephone number (include country code):

Fax number (include country code):

**Send the completed form to:**

Ms Gretchen H. Stanton  
Secretary, SPS Committee

E-mail: [gretchen.stanton@wto.org](mailto:gretchen.stanton@wto.org)  
Fax: + (41) 22 739 5760

**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**MEMBER OFFERING MENTORING ASSISTANCE**

1. Member:
2. Name of relevant Official:
3. Functional title/role of Official:

National Notification Authority ☐

National Enquiry Point ☐

Other (specify)

4. Type of assistance and/or expertise that can be provided :

*(Be as specific as possible, e.g. development of an internal process to ensure that all relevant draft measures are notified in a timely manner; completion of notification formats; receipt and screening of notifications by other Members; circulation of notifications received to national stakeholders; preparation and submission of comments on notifications, establishment of a national website; raising awareness among stakeholders; development of a training programme, etc.)*

5. Preferred language(s):
6. Other working language(s):
7. Preferred contact means (check all that apply):

E-mail ☐

Fax ☐

Telephone ☐

8. Any other relevant information:

*(e.g. regions to which Member would prefer to offer assistance; constraints on offering assistance to specific Members; duration of assistance that can be offered, etc.)*

9. Full contact details of relevant Official:

Name:

Mailing address:

E-mail address:

Telephone number (include country code):

Fax number (include country code):

**Send the completed form to:**

Ms Gretchen H. Stanton  
Secretary, SPS Committee

E-mail: [gretchen.stanton@wto.org](mailto:gretchen.stanton@wto.org)  
Fax: + (41) 22 739 5760

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