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## REPORT (2014) ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

1.1. The present report is being circulated by the Chairperson of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures on her own responsibility. This report provides a summary of the activities and decisions of the Committee during 2014.

1.2. The Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the "SPS Committee") held regular meetings on 25-26 March, 9-10 July, and 15 and 17 October 2014. Ms Maria Araceli Albarece (Philippines) had been re-elected in 2013 as chairperson for 2013-2014. The SPS Committee elected Ms Lillian Bwalya (Zambia) as the new chairperson for 2014-2015 at the July meeting.

1.3. At its July meeting, the Committee adopted the "Procedure to encourage and facilitate the resolution of specific sanitary or phytosanitary issues among Members in accordance with Article 12.2"<sup>1</sup>, thus concluding the last outstanding item from the Committee's second review of the SPS Agreement. This procedure aims to help Members wishing to use the good offices of the Chairperson or another facilitator to resolve trade concerns.

1.4. During 2014, the SPS Committee undertook the Fourth Review of the operation and implementation of the SPS Agreement. Following a proposal submitted in the context of this Review, the Committee agreed to hold a workshop on risk analysis, which was held on 13-14 October 2014. It provided a platform for discussion and experience sharing and best practises concerning SPS-related risk analysis. Other proposals under discussion emanating from the Fourth Review include developing a catalogue of instruments available for WTO Members to manage SPS issues, and a proposal on transparency intended to improve the quality and completeness of notifications.

1.5. At each meeting, Members provided information regarding changes in their SPS policies and situations with respect to food safety emergencies and pest- or disease-outbreaks. For example, Canada provided updates on its new Regulatory Framework for Federal Food Inspection at the March and July meetings, and Japan continued to inform Members regarding its actions in containing the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident.

1.6. The SPS Committee considered a wide range of specific trade concerns. Thirteen new specific trade concerns were raised during the course of 2014, and many previously raised concerns were discussed again. New trade concerns included, *inter alia*, China's concerns regarding Brazil's regulation on certificates for fish and fishery products; Russia's import restrictions on certain plant products from the European Union; Chile's concerns over India's import requirements for blueberries and avocados; Ukraine's concerns over Russia's introduction of new requirements for veterinary certificates; and India's concerns relating to: (i) the United States' high certification costs for its mangoes, (ii) the European Union's ban on mangoes and certain other fruits, (iii) the United States and Australia's non-acceptance of the OIE categorisation for BSE, and (iv) the European Union's withdrawal of equivalence for India's processed organic products. The European Union raised concerns about Russia's measures on live pigs and pork products due to African Swine Fever (ASF). Russia also provided information on this issue, voicing its concerns over the spread of ASF through the Eurasian area. The European Union requested consultations under the Dispute Settlement Understanding on 8 April, and on 22 July 2014 the Dispute Settlement Body established a panel in this matter. At its March meeting, the Committee received the information that 25 previously raised trade concerns had been resolved.

<sup>1</sup> G/SPS/61.

1.7. The SPS Committee examined the operation of the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement. Considering all types of notifications together, a total of 17,373 notifications were submitted to the WTO from 1 January 1995 to 1 October 2014. Between 1 January and 1 October 2014, 793 regular notifications and 76 emergency notifications were circulated. The share of notifications from developing countries in the total continues to be high, at about 64% in 2014. As of September 2014, 111 Members had submitted SPS notifications, and of these, 31 Members had submitted SPS notifications online via the SPS Notification Submission System (NSS).

1.8. Many Members provided the SPS Committee with information regarding their status with respect to specific plant pests and animal diseases. These include, *inter alia*, information from Australia on avian influenza, from Argentina and Paraguay on their foot and mouth disease (FMD) statuses, from Ecuador regarding progress towards recognition as an FMD-free country, from Korea on its animal disease status, and from South Africa regarding recognition as free from porcine epidemic diarrhoea (PED) and peste des petits ruminants (PPR).

1.9. The SPS Committee continued its work on developing a working definition of SPS-related private standards, as well as discussing the implementation of the other actions agreed upon by the SPS Committee (G/SPS/55). An electronic working group consisting of interested Members, under the leadership of China and New Zealand acting as co-stewards, attempted to find consensus language for a working definition.<sup>2</sup> The Secretariat introduced a note on "Existing definitions of private standards in other international organisations", which was revised considering comments from Members.<sup>3</sup>

1.10. Members, Observer Organizations and the Secretariat provided information on their respective SPS-related technical assistance activities at each of the Committee's meetings, with specific information provided by, *inter alia*, the European Union, Russia, the United States, Burundi, Pakistan and Australia. The STDF Secretariat also kept the Committee informed of the work of the Standards and Trade Development Facility.<sup>4</sup>

1.11. The SPS Committee maintained its close working relationship with the Codex, IPPC, and the OIE (often referred to as the "Three Sister" organizations) and received regular updates on their activities. The IPPC noted that its membership increased to 181 members in January 2014, and that the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) would be celebrated in 2015. The OIE informed the SPS Committee that its current membership increased to 180 members, following the addition of Liberia and South Sudan at the OIE's 82<sup>nd</sup> General Session in May 2014. Other observer organizations also provided information on their activities, including technical assistance activities.

1.12. The SPS Committee has tentatively agreed to hold regular meetings on 25–26 March, 15–16 July, and 14–15 October 2015.

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<sup>2</sup> The latest proposed working definition of an SPS-related private standard can be found in the "Second Report of the Co-Stewards of the Private Standards E-working Group on Action 1 (G/SPS/55)", in document G/SPS/W/281.

<sup>3</sup> G/SPS/GEN/1334/Rev.1.

<sup>4</sup> G/SPS/GEN/1311, G/SPS/GEN/1337 and G/SPS/GEN/1357.