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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF 11-13 MARCH 2026

CHAIRPERSON: MS. MARIA COSME (FRANCE)

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT[1]

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

1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1.1. The Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the Committee) held its 94th regular meeting on 11-13 March 2026. The meeting was held in hybrid form, with many delegates attending in person and others joining via a virtual platform. The proposed agenda for the meeting (WTO/AIR/SPS/55) was adopted with amendments.

1.2. The Secretariat reminded the Committee that its email distribution list had been replaced by the E-Delegate generated list. Members were also reminded that they could use eAgenda[2] to submit agenda items, support specific trade concerns (STCs) and other agenda items, and upload statements, as well as circulate statements as GEN documents. Only oral interventions made during the meeting would be reflected in the summary report.

2 INFORMATION SHARING

2.1 Information from Members on relevant activities

2.1.1 New Zealand - Environmental inhibitors in agrifood systems

2.1. New Zealand informed the Committee that FAO had released, in January 2026, a new report entitled "Environmental inhibitors in agrifood systems – Considerations for food safety risk assessment", which it had funded. The report built on an earlier FAO publication issued in 2023 and outlined food-safety considerations and risk-assessment approaches for environmental inhibitors, including potential residue uptake and transfer into animal-derived foods and crops intended for human consumption. New Zealand emphasized that preventing food-safety risks and avoiding trade disruptions required effective regulatory measures, noting that many environmental inhibitors had a history of safe use but increasingly fell outside existing pesticide and veterinary regulatory frameworks. Highlighting the importance of Codex standards to guide risk-based regulation and support consumer confidence, New Zealand indicated that it would continue working with bilateral partners and within relevant Codex committees to support the development of science-based standards addressing any potential risks to human health.

2.1.2 Japan - Update on the safety of Japanese food products regarding radioactive materials

2.2. Japan welcomed Chinese Taipei's decision, announced in November 2025, to lift the import restrictions introduced after the Great East Japan Earthquake and the subsequent nuclear power station accident in 2011. Japan recalled that very few Members still maintained restrictions on Japanese food products, which lacked scientific basis and were inconsistent with the SPS Agreement. Japan had requested those Members to lift the remaining measures.

2.3. Korea thanked Japan for sharing information on its food safety status, and made reference to its relevant statements made at previous Committee meetings.

2.1.3 Russian Federation - Results of the international conference "Food Safety and AMR"

2.4. The Russian Federation informed the Committee of its multi-level system of sanitary and epidemiological surveillance aimed at reducing public-health risks associated with unsafe food, including foodborne pathogens, chemical contamination, GMOs and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The Russian Federation highlighted that food safety remained a priority within its state policy on healthy nutrition and emphasized the importance it attached to international standards, guidelines and principles governing the safety and quality of traded food products. In this context, the Russian Federation reported on the international conference "Food Safety and Joint Efforts to Reduce Antimicrobial Resistance", held in Moscow on 20–21 November 2025, as a continuation of similar events convened in 2017, 2019 and 2022.

2.5. The conference gathered experts from several countries from Western and Eastern Europe, Transcaucasia, Central and North-East Asia, as well as international organizations of the

[2] eAgenda is being increasingly used. An overwhelming majority of Members making interventions in the meeting uploaded their statements in eAgenda prior to or during the meeting.

Quadripartite Partnership, and presented joint work on addressing AMR in animal husbandry and the agrifood sector, including risk analysis, coordinated surveillance, identification of resistant pathogens and residue detection in food. The Russian Federation noted that the discussions underscored the importance of regional cooperation, risk-based approaches, genomic monitoring, strengthened laboratory capacity and greater awareness of best agricultural practices and responsible antimicrobial use. The Russian Federation indicated that it would continue organizing scientific discussions aimed at developing regional and global solutions to food safety challenges.

2.1.4 Ukraine – Report on SPS activities

2.6. Ukraine informed the Committee of recent developments in its SPS framework, noting the ongoing modernization of its legislation to align with international requirements while maintaining appropriate protection for human, animal and plant health. New laws on plant health and veterinary medicine were being implemented, introducing new requirements for veterinary medicinal product registration, strengthened animal welfare standards, more risk-oriented SPS regulation, enhanced pesticide-use controls and the legal basis for digital certification. Ukraine underlined that the ongoing war had heightened biosecurity challenges through infrastructure destruction, ecosystem disruption and increased interaction between wild and domestic animals, yet state control systems had continued functioning through a multi-level response model. Ukraine maintained a stable epizootic situation and preserved key disease-free statuses, and was developing an integrated digital animal health system covering registration, movement tracking, disease control and laboratory information.

2.7. Ukraine also continued strengthening laboratory capacities and adjusting monitoring programmes to respond to trading-partner requirements, while emphasizing that SPS measures should remain science-based and not constitute disguised restrictions on trade. In the phytosanitary area, Ukraine had joined the ePhyto Hub, reducing clearance delays and verification requests. Ukraine highlighted the severe impact of continued attacks on its transport and energy infrastructure, resulting in reduced export volumes, and stressed the importance of trade-facilitative measures, particularly for plant products. It also reported work on an "eFood" platform to integrate food safety data systems and ensure traceability. Ukraine reaffirmed its commitment to transparency, international cooperation and compliance with WTO obligations despite the ongoing consequences of the war.

2.8. The European Union, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Switzerland and Norway expressed their appreciation for Ukraine's efforts to fulfil its WTO SPS obligations, maintain food safety standards, and deliver food to international markets. Various Members stated that the invasion was exacerbating food insecurity, had inflated prices, and increased hunger. Members called on the Russian Federation to cease military operations in Ukraine, noting that it constituted a violation of international law.

2.9. The Russian Federation reiterated its view that the WTO was not an appropriate forum for political discussions and expressed concern that some Members sought to introduce political issues into the work of the Committee. The Russian Federation considered that references to the situation in Ukraine distracted from the Committee's mandate and stated that it was obliged to respond to what it regarded as unfounded allegations. The Russian Federation rejected claims that the situation in Ukraine had triggered a global food crisis, pointing instead to wider systemic factors such as rising interest rates, commodity-price volatility, adverse weather conditions, "green protectionism", biofuel policies and sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation noted that global agricultural markets had shown signs of stabilization, referring to the FAO Food Price Index for February 2026.

2.2 Information from Codex, IPPC and WOAH on relevant activities

2.2.1 Codex (G/SPS/GEN/2386)

2.10. The report on Codex activities is contained in document G/SPS/GEN/2386.

2.2.2 IPPC (G/SPS/GEN/2378)

2.11. The report on IPPC activities is contained in document G/SPS/GEN/2378.

2.2.3 WOAH (G/SPS/GEN/2388)

2.12. WOAH informed the Committee that its 93rd annual General Session, that would take place on 18-22 May 2026 in Paris, would include the adoption of administrative and technical resolutions as well as an animal health forum entitled "Investing in Animal Health to Secure Everyone's Future". The four Specialist Commissions had met in February 2026 to continue revising existing and developing new standards, and the reports would be published at the end of March. WOAH drew particular attention to the revised chapters of the Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes, including on measures applicable to the exportation, transit and importation of commodities and on border inspection posts and quarantine centres, on a new chapter with recommendations for international veterinary certification and import and export procedures, and on updated and new chapters on zoning and compartmentalization.

2.13. Referring to the official recognition of animal health status and the endorsement control programmes, WOAH informed that the full list of members and the reports of the February meeting of the Scientific Commission would be made available on its website in March. WOAH also invited Members to consult the second report of its Observatory project, which included an in-depth assessment of the implementation of standards across six priority areas. In parallel, WOAH was developing a digital portal to provide a central environment for collection, processing and visualization of data. To conclude, WOAH referred to three global meetings held in 2025: the Third Global Conference on Biological Threat Reduction, the WOAH Forum on Animal Health and the Global Forum on Zoning.

3 CROSS—CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Follow-up to MC13 Declaration

3.1.1 Information from Members

3.1. No Member provided any information under this agenda item.

3.1.2 Update from the Chairperson

3.2. The Chairperson reminded Members that the agenda of meeting of the General Council that was taking place that same week listed an item for action/decision on the draft General Council Decision on Enhancing the Precise, Effective and Operational Implementation of Special and Differential Treatment Provisions of the SPS and TBT Agreements (WT/GC/W/974/Rev.1) submitted by the G-90. The Committee would be informed of any further developments on this issue.

3.2 Topics for 2026 thematic sessions/workshop

3.3. The Chairperson recalled the proposals discussed in the informal meeting on the topics for thematic sessions/workshops to be held in 2026 and 2027. She also informed the Committee that the Secretariat had confirmed the availability of funds to for a workshop on transparency in June 2026.

3.4. The United States took the floor to suggest that the two first thematic sessions from the below list could be held in November 2026.

3.5. The Committee agreed to the following schedule:

a. June 2026 - workshop on transparency;

b. November 2026 - thematic session on promoting transparency in sampling, testing, and analytic methods used to determine compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, based on a proposal from Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States (G/SPS/GEN/2387); and thematic session on hitchhiker pests in international trade, based on a proposal by Australia and Canada (G/SPS/GEN/2389); and

c. March 2027 - thematic session on artificial intelligence and emerging technologies in the SPS area, based on a proposal from Saudi Arabia (G/SPS/GEN/2381).

4 SPECIFIC TRADE CONCERNS

4.1. Before the adoption of the agenda, China withdrew one new STC: Canada's proposal to transfer the maximum levels for ethyl carbamate in alcoholic beverages to the list of contaminants and other adulterating substances in foods. The European Union removed two previously raised STCs: Qatar's new import rules for dairy products (ID 529) and Viet Nam's procedure for the listing of exporting establishments - Circular 04/2024 (ID 608). These STCs had been included in the annotated draft agenda circulated in document WTO/AIR/SPS/55.

4.1 New issues

4.1.1 France - Suspension of food imports containing residues of glufosinate, mancozeb, thiophanate-methyl, carbendazim and benomyl (ID 620) - Concerns of Argentina, Paraguay, Colombia, Brazil and Uruguay

4.2. Argentina expressed strong concern regarding a recent measure adopted by France suspending imports of food products containing residues of glufosinate, mancozeb, thiophanate-methyl, carbendazim and benomyl, noting that the measure lacked scientific justification. Argentina considered the action commercially and systemically troubling, as it effectively prohibited imports of products containing residues of substances for which import tolerances had been established at the EU level and for which relevant Codex standards existed. Argentina stressed that rejecting consignments based solely on the detection of a substance, without a full risk assessment including dietary exposure, had no scientific basis and constituted an arbitrary measure inconsistent with WTO SPS obligations. Argentina further indicated that such measures fragmented regulatory frameworks, created legal and commercial uncertainty, and affected both intra-EU trade and the multilateral trading system. Argentina respectfully requested France to align its SPS measures with its international commitments under the SPS Agreement and to avoid their use as arbitrary restrictions on international trade.

4.3. Paraguay expressed concern regarding the measure notified by France in document G/SPS/N/FRA/22, suspending imports and marketing of food and feed containing residues of glufosinate, mancozeb, thiophanate-methyl, carbendazim and benomyl. Referring to its joint communication with Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala in document G/SPS/GEN/2394, Paraguay noted that the European Commission had indicated at the 20 January 2026 meeting of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (SCOPAFF) that an EU-wide emergency measure was not warranted and that most of the relevant MRLs were considered safe by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Paraguay therefore asked the European Union to provide the technical justification for France's measure and explain its consistency with Articles 2.2 and 5.1 of the SPS Agreement. Paraguay also recalled the 3 March 2026 declaration of the *Consejo Agropecuario del Sur*, stressing that the unilateral French measure lacked scientific basis, conflicted with EU import tolerances and Codex standards, and could disproportionately affect developing countries by reducing market access, increasing compliance costs and undermining predictability. Paraguay added that rejecting products based solely on the detection of a substance, without a full risk assessment, was inconsistent with SPS obligations and contributed to food loss. Paraguay urged France to align its SPS measures with international commitments and avoid arbitrary or unjustified restrictions on trade.

4.4. Colombia referred to document G/SPS/GEN/2394, submitted jointly with Ecuador, Guatemala and Paraguay, concerning France's notification G/SPS/N/FRA/22. Colombia referred to the French *Arrêt* of 5 January 2026, which suspended the importation, introduction and marketing of certain food products from third countries containing residues of active substances prohibited in the European Union, noting that the measure affected Colombian exports such as avocados, citrus, mangos and papayas. Colombia expressed concern about the measure's potential commercial implications and the legal questions it raised under the SPS Agreement and the EU harmonized framework, observing that it appeared to introduce stricter requirements for the French market than those applicable at the EU level. Colombia requested clarifications from France and the European Union on the scientific basis for the measure, on its consistency with EU regulatory competences and regulatory coherence, and on its practical application, including whether products compliant with EU-harmonized MRLs could nevertheless be rejected in France. While recognizing Members' right to protect health, Colombia emphasized that SPS measures had to be science-based, necessary and not more trade-restrictive than required, and encouraged France and the European Union to continue

technical dialogue and seek transparent and predictable solutions consistent with multilateral obligations.

4.5. Brazil expressed concern regarding France's decision, notified in document G/SPS/N/FRA/22, to suspend imports of food products containing residues of glufosinate, mancozeb, thiophanate-methyl, carbendazim and benomyl, noting that the measure had immediate effects and imposed significant restrictions on agricultural exports, particularly from developing countries. Brazil observed that the decision did not appear to be based on a thorough risk assessment or transparent scientific evidence, raising questions about its consistency with Articles 2.2 and 5.1 of the SPS Agreement. Brazil further expressed concern about the lack of prior consultation and absence of a transition period, which, in its view, undermined the principles of transparency and predictability under Article 7 and Annex B of the SPS Agreement, and created operational challenges for exporters. Brazil also noted potential regulatory inconsistencies within the EU market, as the French measure seemed to diverge from the EU harmonized framework for MRLs and active substance authorizations. Brazil requested France to reconsider and revoke the measure, and to provide any studies or risk assessments underpinning it and engage in dialogue with affected Members to pursue science-based, transparent and predictable solutions consistent with the SPS Agreement.

4.6. Uruguay expressed concern regarding the measure notified by France suspending the importation, introduction and marketing of food and feed from third countries containing residues of certain active substances. While recognizing the importance of protecting human health, Uruguay recalled that SPS measures had to be based on scientific principles and appropriate risk assessments, in line with Articles 2 and 5 of the SPS Agreement. Uruguay noted that MRLs for these substances existed both internationally under Codex and within the EU framework, and that such MRLs had been considered safe based on assessments by EFSA. It observed that, although approvals for certain active substances had not been renewed and some MRLs were under review, there was no EU-wide prohibition on importing products containing residues within established limits. Uruguay further reported that the French measure appeared to apply a criterion based solely on detection of residues, irrespective of existing MRLs, which could be more trade-restrictive than necessary. Uruguay emphasized the importance of harmonizing SPS measures on the basis of international standards and ensuring that they did not constitute arbitrary or unjustified restrictions on trade, and noted that similar concerns had been raised by several EU member States during the 20 January 2026 SCOPAFF meeting. Uruguay encouraged France to reconsider the measure and act consistently with the SPS Agreement, taking account of relevant international standards and the EU regulatory framework.

4.7. Costa Rica supported the concern regarding France's emergency measure, considering that an action without sufficient scientific basis and with protectionist effects would be inconsistent with the SPS Agreement. Costa Rica noted France's stated health concerns but expected France to provide supporting studies and respect the temporary nature of emergency measures. It did not support France's approach, including any move toward "technical zero" MRLs, without a robust risk assessment, and expressed concern about potential impacts on its exports such as mango, melon and papaya, and about the possible replication of the measure at the EU level. Costa Rica reiterated its willingness to engage in technical dialogue to ensure that health-protection objectives were met through science-based, WTO-consistent measures that avoided unjustified barriers to trade.

4.8. Canada expressed its concern at the precedent set by France by suspending imports of certain products treated with five pesticides banned in the European Union. Canada sought further clarification on how the decree aligned with France's WTO obligations, on how the measure would be enforced within the EU single market and on the review process or timelines that were being considered to reassess the decree. Canada encouraged ongoing dialogue to help avoid unintended trade impacts and urged France and the European Union to follow established science- and risk-based methodologies to set MRLs, to ensure consistency with WTO obligations.

4.9. Kenya supported the concern regarding France's suspension of food imports containing mancozeb and other substances, considering the measure an arbitrary restriction based on hazard-driven "cut-off" criteria rather than internationally agreed risk-assessment practices, and therefore inconsistent with Articles 2.1 and 2.3 of the SPS Agreement. Kenya emphasized the importance of mancozeb for pest control in key tropical crops and in the vital flower industry, noting its role in pest resistance management. Kenya considered the measure more trade-restrictive than necessary under Article 5.6 and stressed that it did not take into account the special needs of

developing countries, as required under Articles 10.1 and 10.2 of the SPS Agreement. Kenya requested France to review its decision.

4.10. Panama took note of the information provided on France's suspension of imports of food containing residues of certain active substances and underscored that SPS measures affecting trade had to be based on sound scientific principles and relevant international standards. Panama highlighted the importance of Codex standards for the international harmonization of food safety standards and to ensure safe trade of food products, and encouraged France to continue dialogue with interested Members and ensure that any measure adopted reflected international standards so as to avoid unnecessary restrictions, particularly for developing countries.

4.11. Guatemala expressed interest and concern in relation to the measure being considered by France, and recalled that it was a co-signatory of document G/SPS/GEN/2394 and would welcome relevant replies from France. Guatemala assured that it give due follow up to the matter at issue.

4.12. The Dominican Republic expressed its support to the delegations raising this concern, noting the importance of this point.

4.13. The European Union acknowledged the interest expressed by Argentina, Paraguay, Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Canada, Kenya, Panama, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic in this issue. The European Union explained that, on 5 January 2026, France had adopted an interim emergency measure under Article 54 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, published in the French Official Journal on 7 January 2026, suspending imports of certain plant products containing residues of carbendazim, thiophanate methyl, benomyl, glufosinate and mancozeb, as reflected in notification G/SPS/N/FRA/22. The European Union reported that, in line with Article 54, the European Commission convened the SCOPAFF on 20 January 2026 to consider possible amendment, abrogation or extension of the national measure. As there was no qualified majority in favour of an EU wide emergency measure or other action, the Commission continued its ongoing work: finalizing the draft Regulation on MRLs for carbendazim, thiophanate methyl and benomyl (notified in document G/SPS/N/EU/916), progressing EFSA's update of the glufosinate risk assessment, and developing analytical methods for dithiocarbamates. The European Union indicated that the French authorities had published replies to FAQs on their official website and noted the concerns expressed by Members, including those in document G/SPS/GEN/2394.

4.1.2 EU proposal to eliminate pesticide import tolerances (ID 621) - Concerns of the United States, Canada, Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay

4.14. The United States expressed concern about the EU proposal to eliminate pesticide import tolerances and prohibit residues of substances not authorized in the European Union. The United States urged the European Union to base any changes on completed risk assessments, maintain science- and risk-based MRLs aligned with Codex, and avoid withdrawing import tolerances without scientific justification. It expressed concern that amendments to the EU legal framework appeared to be considered before completion of the Joint Research Centre study and the full impact assessment, warning that abandoning risk assessment as the basis for SPS measures could have severe implications for agricultural trade. The United States also noted France's notification G/SPS/N/FRA/22, which it considered to pre-empt the proposed EU approach, and encouraged EU member States to refrain from such actions. The United States urged the European Union to fully consider the concerns raised by the United States and other WTO Members. It provided its statement in document G/SPS/GEN/2397.

4.15. Canada expressed its concern at the alignment of import tolerances on pesticide MRLs with EU domestic regulatory decisions, rather than internationally recognized risk-assessment outcomes, established in the EU Food and Feed Safety Simplification Package (the "Omnibus Proposal"). In Canada's view, this constituted a violation of Articles 2.2, 2.3, 3.3 and 5.5 of the SPS Agreement and introduced significant uncertainty for producers and exporters. Canada further emphasized that the EU approach did not reflect the diversity of Members' agricultural production systems, which would create unnecessary barriers to trade. Canada urged the European Union to ensure that its measures did not impose its own production constrains to third countries and to give full consideration to Codex MRLs when establishing or reviewing import tolerances. Committed to constructive engagement with the European Union, Canada encouraged continued dialogue to avoid unintended trade impacts from the implementation of the Omnibus Proposal.

4.16. Paraguay raised concern that the EU regulatory approach, including notification G/SPS/N/EU/911, undermined the rules-based trading system. It recalled the questions raised in G/SPS/GEN/2393 regarding the EU Omnibus Proposal, which Paraguay considered inconsistent with SPS obligations. Paraguay noted that setting MRLs at the limit of quantification based solely on hazard contradicted Article 2.2, risked arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination under Articles 2.3 and 5.5, and disregarded Codex-based MRLs without justification under Articles 3.3 and 5 of the SPS Agreement. It expressed concern that reducing MRLs for substances not approved in the European Union amounted to an extraterritorial application of EU rules, and that eliminating import tolerances while maintaining emergency authorizations could raise national-treatment concerns. Paraguay stressed that the proposal appeared to be driven by competitiveness objectives rather than food safety and urged the European Union to take trading partners' concerns seriously. It further confirmed that it would submit comments before the 30 March deadline.

4.17. Argentina expressed concern regarding the EU Omnibus Proposal. It noted that the proposal would eliminate import tolerances for active substances not authorized in the European Union even when they posed no risk to consumers. Argentina considered that the initiative, linked to the EU "Vision for Agriculture and Food", aimed at "levelling the playing field" for EU farmers, thus shifting the purpose of MRLs away from food safety protection towards internal policy objectives related to competitiveness. Argentina stressed that MRLs were essential tools for predictable agri-food supply chains and had to be established on risk-based scientific assessments consistent with Codex standards. Argentina warned that setting MRLs for reasons unrelated to consumer safety or based only on hazard would depart from established risk assessment principles and be inconsistent with the SPS Agreement. Argentina requested that any regulatory changes to MRLs or import tolerances be based on scientific evidence and international standards, and include adequate transition periods to avoid unnecessary trade disruptions while ensuring consumer protection and predictability for international operators.

4.18. Uruguay expressed concern regarding elements of the EU Omnibus Proposal that would eliminate import tolerances for certain pesticides. Uruguay noted that the proposal could, in practice, result in MRLs being set at the limit of quantification even where existing MRLs reflected good agricultural practices (GAP) in third countries or international standards. Uruguay recalled that SPS measures had to be based on a risk assessment of dietary exposure and stressed that the non-approval of an active substance within a Member did not constitute such an assessment. It was concerned that applying to imports the same restrictions used domestically, in the name of safeguarding EU producers' competitiveness, did not adequately reflect SPS obligations or the differing production conditions and GAP of third countries. Uruguay also noted that eliminating import tolerances while retaining the possibility of emergency authorizations within the EU could create asymmetrical or discriminatory regulatory outcomes. Uruguay stressed the importance of Codex standards for harmonization and scientific grounding and cautioned that departing from them set a negative precedent. It encouraged the European Union to ensure that any regulatory revisions remain fully coherent with SPS principles and take into account the concerns raised by WTO Members.

4.19. Costa Rica supported the concern regarding the European Union's proposal to amend Regulation (EC) 396/2005, noting that setting MRLs at the limit of quantification for non-approved substances - even where current MRLs reflected GAP or Codex standards - could create de facto trade restrictions that disproportionately affected developing countries. It recalled that MRL revisions under the SPS Agreement had to be based on robust, transparent and science-based risk assessments rather than hazard criteria. While noting the clarifications provided on import tolerances and transitional provisions, Costa Rica remained concerned that a generalized tightening of tolerances would undermine predictability for developing country exporters and risked generating unnecessary barriers. It encouraged the European Union to assess carefully the external impacts of the proposal and maintain open technical dialogue to avoid unjustified obstacles to agricultural trade.

4.20. Panama took note of the information provided regarding the proposal to eliminate certain pesticide tolerance levels and underscored that any such measure had to be supported by solid scientific evidence and appropriate risk assessments in line with the SPS Agreement. Panama highlighted the need to carefully consider the potential impact on agricultural production in developing countries, particularly where limited technical alternatives existed in the short term. Panama encouraged the European Union to continue technical dialogue with interested Members and to consider approaches that achieved health-protection objectives while avoiding unnecessary or disproportionate effects on trade.

4.21. Ecuador expressed concern regarding the European Union's notification G/SPS/N/EU/911, noting that several proposed changes in the Omnibus Proposal - particularly the elimination of import tolerances - could create unnecessary obstacles to trade and conflict with SPS principles on harmonization, proportionality and non-discrimination. Ecuador stressed that SPS measures had to be based on scientifically justified risk assessments consistent with Codex standards and reflecting actual consumer exposure, and recalled that the non-approval of a substance within the European Union did not itself demonstrate risk from residues in imported products. It warned that defaulting MRLs to 0.01 mg/kg could constitute a disproportionate restriction on trade. Ecuador emphasized the importance of maintaining the import tolerance mechanism to allow individualized, risk based MRLs that preserved a balanced approach between consumer protection and the facilitation of international trade.

4.22. Brazil expressed interest in the STC raised by several Members regarding EU notification G/SPS/N/EU/911, particularly the proposed amendments to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 on MRLs for pesticides and the regime governing import tolerances. Brazil underlined that import tolerances were essential for ensuring the practical application of the principles of equivalence and harmonization while maintaining high levels of food safety. It noted that zero tolerance policies could create significant challenges for producers and, in practice, restrict trade. Brazil recalled that many Members had voiced similar concerns and stressed the importance of ensuring that any regulatory adjustments by the European Union remain science-based and preserve sufficient flexibility to support fair and predictable agricultural trade.

4.23. India echoed concerns regarding EU notification G/SPS/N/EU/911, noting that the proposed amendments to food and feed safety regulations, including pesticide approvals and MRLs, could affect agricultural trade. India stressed that SPS measures had to rely on sound scientific principles and robust risk assessment, avoid unnecessary barriers to trade, and be developed and implemented transparently and predictably. India indicated that it would follow developments closely.

4.24. Guatemala expressed interest and concern regarding the EU measure and joined as co-sponsor of the questions submitted in document G/SPS/GEN/2393, requesting that the European Union provide the corresponding replies and clarifications. Guatemala indicated that it would continue monitoring this matter.

4.25. The European Union acknowledged the interest expressed by the United States, Canada, Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Brazil, India and Guatemala. The European Union explained that the Commission had adopted the Omnibus Proposal on 16 December 2025, aiming to simplify, clarify and modernize selected provisions across several pieces of EU food and feed safety legislation while maintaining a high level of health protection. The Omnibus Proposal included proposed amendments to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005, such as a more flexible approach to transitional measures when MRLs were lowered, provisions on permanent MRLs based on monitoring data, alignment of terminology, and the possibility on a case-by-case basis to set MRLs at the limit of quantification for the most hazardous substances. The European Union noted that the proposal was under review by the European Parliament and the EU Council under the ordinary legislative procedure and had been notified as G/SPS/N/EU/911 with a commenting deadline of 30 March 2026. The European Union invited Members to submit comments through the notification procedure, and explained that such comments would be considered in the preparation of the final text. It also referred to an ongoing impact assessment study examining the EU competitive position and the international implications of the principles announced in the "Vision for Agriculture and Food", indicating that further amendments to the legal framework could be proposed if appropriate. The European Union drew attention to the supporting Commission Staff Working Document SWD (2025) 1030 final and the Q&A section on the Commission website on simplification legislation, which would be made available in the text of the statement on eAgenda, and reiterated its encouragement for Members to submit written comments.

4.1.3 Japan's revision of butachlor MRL for brown rice (ID 622) - Concerns of India

4.26. India expressed concern regarding Japan's proposal to reduce the MRL for butachlor in brown rice to 0.01 mg/kg, noting that this was more stringent than India's existing standard of 0.05 mg/kg and could affect its rice exports, including to Japan. India submitted that the proposed limit appeared to lack transparent scientific justification and could create unnecessary barriers to trade. India

requested Japan to provide a detailed scientific risk assessment and the justification supporting the revised MRL, taking into account India's trade interests.

4.27. Japan explained that it had set the MRL for butachlor in brown rice at 0.01 mg/kg based on crop residual studies and had notified the draft measure on 17 July 2025, noting that no comments were received from India before India raised this concern. Japan emphasized that the revision followed SPS procedures and notification guidelines and was supported by sufficient scientific evidence, expressing deep concern that the issue was raised only after the final adoption. Japan expressed its readiness to closely communicate with India.

4.1.4 Korea's pesticide MRL for tebuconazole in broccoli (ID 623) - Concerns of China

4.28. China expressed concern regarding Korea's implementation of a "Positive List System" for pesticide residues in broccoli, under which products without established residue limits were subject to a default limit of 0.01 mg/kg. China noted that, following detections in July 2025 of residues in two broccoli consignments, its fresh broccoli exports to Korea had been effectively blocked, causing significant disruption to the sector and bilateral trade. China stated that a comparison of Korea's requirements with Codex and other Members' standards showed that Korea's approach was considerably more stringent and, in China's view, inconsistent with SPS principles on harmonization, consistency and scientific justification. China considered that the current limit lacked adequate scientific risk assessment and exceeded what would be necessary according to FAO/WHO data. China recommended that Korea adopt Codex standards to avoid unnecessary trade restrictions and, should the 0.01 mg/kg limit be maintained, provide the scientific basis, full risk-assessment report and quantitative analysis of its appropriate level of protection to demonstrate that the measure was no more trade-restrictive than required and did not constitute a disguised restriction on trade.

4.29. Korea took note of China's interest in exporting agricultural products, including broccoli, and outlined its regulatory framework. Korea explained that, since 2019, it had fully implemented the positive list system, under which a uniform limit of 0.01 mg/kg applied to pesticides without established MRLs, and that this standard was applied equally to domestic and imported agricultural products. Korea noted that it also operated an import tolerance system allowing exporting countries to request individual MRLs, and that 1,136 import tolerances for 201 pesticides had been established to that day. Korea indicated that it would promptly review any import tolerance application from China supported by scientific evidence and reaffirmed its commitment to cooperate with China to resolve the matter, encouraging the prompt submission of an application.

4.1.5 Kenya's reduction of maximum level for aflatoxin B1 in groundnut flour (ID 624) - Concerns of India

4.30. India expressed concern over Kenya's proposal to establish the limit for aflatoxin B1 in groundnut flour at 5 ppb, which was more stringent than India's current standard of 10 ppb. Noting this limit could create unnecessary trade barriers, India had sought clarification on the scientific risk assessment supporting the 5 ppb limit, its alignment with Codex standards, any proposed transition period, and the possibility of harmonization or acceptance of equivalent measures. India encouraged Kenya to make sure that its measure was based on scientific evidence, trade-facilitative and consistent with Articles 2 and 5 of the SPS Agreement.

4.31. Kenya took note of India's concern and explained that the 5 ppb limit for aflatoxin B1 in groundnut flour was established in the East African Standard KS EAS 1171:2024, for technical reasons that were available upon request. Kenya indicated its readiness to continue bilateral discussions with India on this issue.

4.1.6 Kenya's revision of maximum level for histamine in dried and salted fish products (ID 625) - Concerns of India

4.32. India expressed its concern on Kenya's draft East African Standard proposing a maximum histamine limit of 20 mg/kg for certain categories of dried and salted fish products, which was significantly more stringent than the 200 mg/kg limit permitted under Codex standards. Noting the potential trade-disruptive consequences of this proposed limit, India requested Kenya to provide the scientific risk assessment justifying the measure and to consider harmonization with Codex standards to ensure the measure remained science-based and trade-facilitative.

4.33. Kenya took note of India's concern and clarified that the East African Standard EAS 828:2022 on dried and salted fish had already been aligned with the Codex histamine limit of 200 mg/kg through a technical corrigendum adopted in accordance with East African Standards harmonization procedures. Kenya confirmed that there was therefore no deviation from Codex standards and expressed its readiness to continue bilateral discussions with India.

4.1.7 Korea's requirements for the use of food additives in imported food products (ID 626) - Concerns of China

4.34. China noted that Korea had frequently issued non-compliance notifications of Chinese food products, followed by their return or destruction, on the ground of illegal addition of food additives. Citing Codex's General Standard for Food Additives and Korea's Food Additive Code, as well as the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), China was of the view that this was due to: (1) the lack of consideration of the "principle of reasonable introduction" of food additives through raw materials instead of being artificially added during the production process; (2) the failure to accurately implement the criteria for naturally occurring substances; and (3) an overly strict standard for the use of preservatives such as sorbic acid. Arguing that they created unnecessary obstacles to trade, China shared its view that Korea's relevant regulations were contrary to the principles of harmonization and appropriate level of protection of the SPS Agreement. China asked Korea to clarify its declaration procedures upon cargo entry to ensure that the goods would not be returned or destroyed, as well as procedures for re-inspection and appeal, to expand the scope of recognition and adjust the limits for naturally occurring substances. It further requested Korea to cancel the requirement for duplicated recognition of similar products that had already been approved as naturally occurring substances, and to re-evaluate the scope of use of sorbic acid based on Codex standards. China urged Korea to provide the entry declaration requirements and precautions for food with composite ingredients, as well as the re-inspection and appeal procedures for cases where additives were detected due to "reasonable introduction" and where they were "naturally occurring". Finally, China referred to three sets of technical documents prepared to explain the scientific foundations of its requests, indicating that such documents would be uploaded to eAgenda.

4.35. Korea had explained its relevant domestic systems and legislation to China in response to the inquiries received on food additives, and further clarified that it had established specifications and standards of use for 637 permitted food additives. Korea remained committed to supporting continued bilateral expert-level discussions through the existing food safety cooperation channels, including the Korea-China Cooperation Committee and Food Standards Expert Meeting.

4.1.8 The Russian Federation's delays in lifting the suspension on imports of fishery products (ID 627) - Concerns of Thailand

4.36. Thailand raised its concerns over delays in lifting the suspension on imports of fishery products into the Russian Federation. According to Thailand, four Thai establishments producing canned fish products had been suspended since 2018 despite the submission of information and supporting documentation to the Russian Federation's Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (FSVPS). Thailand regretted the lack of information on the progress of the review process or its outcome. In addition, one dried fish processing establishment was suspended since 2022 despite the corrective actions reported to FSVPS. Thailand noted the lack of confirmation of the scheduling for an on-site visit. Recalling obligations established in Article 8 and Annex C of the SPS Agreement, Thailand urged the Russian Federation to expedite the review process and lift the suspension on the four canned fish processing establishments, and to schedule the on-site inspection by the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) experts for the dried fish processing establishment. Thailand stood ready for constructive engagement to resolve this matter.

4.37. The Russian Federation explained that the temporary restrictions imposed were due to violations detected in the exported products from seven enterprises, and noted that Thailand had submitted materials regarding the violations for some, but not all of the enterprises. Lifting the restrictions was subject to EAEU specialists' inspection to assess the effectiveness of the measures taken to eliminate the identified risk. Acknowledging Thailand's request of August 2025 to schedule the inspection and expressing its readiness for comprehensive bilateral cooperation, the Russian Federation confirmed that there were no plans at that time to inspect Thai fish processing plants in 2026.

4.1.9 Costa Rica's undue delay and lack of response in approval procedures for products of animal origin (ID 628) - Concerns of Brazil

4.38. Acknowledging repeated bilateral contacts, Brazil raised its concerns regarding undue delays and the absence of substantive responses in approval procedures for products of animal origin of priority interest for them. Brazil regretted that technical dialogue with Costa Rica's National Animal Health Service (SENASA) had not been effective, despite its commitment to facilitate progress. Noting several pending dossiers, Brazil underscored that market access for beef and beef products, pork and poultry meat remained of primary importance. Brazil reiterated its availability to a establish regular channels for bilateral dialogue and remained open to engage with Costa Rica on this issue.

4.39. Costa Rica had explained SENASA's approval procedure in the bilateral exchanges held with Brazil since 2025. Costa Rica underscored the administrative load required to attend to Brazil's requests, as well as those of other trading partners, and informed the Committee that both parties had agreed to prioritize four products: flours of animal origin (fish, pork and poultry), genetic material (poultry file), fishery products (15 establishments) and honey and its products (documentary assessment and evaluation of one establishment). Noting concrete examples of progress on several other dossiers, Costa Rica would continue to process the requests in line with the agreements reached between relevant competent authorities.

4.1.10 European Union (Spain) - Border rejections of composite products due to an additional heat-treatment requirement not provided for in the applicable EU rules (ID 629) - Concerns of Colombia

4.40. Colombia expressed concerns at the delays, rejections and requests for additional information for its composite products at certain EU borders, namely Spain. Noting the adjustments made after an audit carried out by DG SANTE in 2023, Colombia raised particular concerns about rejections of dairy raw materials verified by Colombian competent authorities, which Colombia perceived as inconsistent with the official guidance provided by the European Commission. Colombia asked the European Union to provide the legal basis for requesting additional heat treatment and to confirm that products complying with the current legislation could access the EU market. Questioning whether observed rejections followed an official interpretation or a non-uniform implementation of the legislation, Colombia invited the European Union to issue a technical clarification on four specific points to ensure a harmonized implementation at the borders. Committed to protecting public health, Colombia underscored the need for health standards to be applied in a transparent, consistent and uniform manner

4.41. Noting the ongoing bilateral exchanges, the European Union confirmed that dairy products intended for entry into the EU territory, either as such or as components of composite products, had to be treated in an EU approved or EU listed establishment in Colombia. The reason was Colombia's inclusion in Annex XVIII to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/404 for entry into the Union of dairy products, which required a specific risk-mitigating treatment against foot and mouth disease (FMD). The European Union further expressed its willingness to continue bilateral discussions with Colombia.

4.1.11 India's import restrictions on Japanese cedar (ID 630) - Concerns of Japan

4.42. Japan raised a concern about the import restrictions imposed by India on Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria Japonica*). Both countries had engaged in technical consultations following Japan's request for India to lift the import ban. Japan regretted that, despite the phytosanitary measures agreed upon in June 2021, India's domestic administrative procedures had remained in place for more than four years without any scientific justification, hindering exports of Japanese cedar. Sharing the view that these restrictions constituted a violation of the SPS Agreement, Japan urged India to comply with its obligations, avoid undue delays and finalize the procedure required to lift the import ban.

4.43. Confirming the ongoing bilateral discussions, India added that the issue had been further discussed in a recent India–Japan Joint Working Group meeting held on 2 March 2026. India reiterated its commitment to engaging constructively towards progress on this matter.

4.1.12 Australia; Japan; Latvia; Lithuania; Poland; Romania; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; United States - Lack of communication on seeds and planting material (ID 631) - Concerns of the Russian Federation

4.44. The Russian Federation raised its concern at the lack of communication from several Members' competent authorities, and asked them to provide prompt responses to the FSVPS' requests for confirmation of the phytosanitary status of seeds and planting material intended for exports to the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation clarified that the corresponding requirements were regulated by the Federal Law No. 206-FZ of 21 July 2014, "On Plant Quarantine", and the Rules for the Control of Production Sites (including Processing), Shipment of Quarantine Products intended for import. It further urged the competent authorities of relevant Members to respond promptly to its requests of confirmation of the phytosanitary status of seed and planting material intended for export to the Russian Federation.

4.2 Issues previously raised

4.2.1 EU MRLs for alpha-cypermethrin, buprofezin, chlorothalonil, chlorpyrifos, chlorpyrifos-methyl, cypermethrin, diflubenzuron, ethoxysulfuron, glufosinate, imazalil, ioxynil, iprodione, mancozeb, molinate, picoxystrobin and tepraloxydim (ID 448 - See also related STCs ID 453, 454, 457, 474, 475, 517) - Concerns of Paraguay, the United States, India, Colombia and Brazil

4.45. Paraguay reiterated concerns that the European Union continued reducing MRLs to limits of detection without sufficient scientific justification, despite EFSA considering many substances safe, and questioned how the rejection of scientifically supported import tolerances could be compatible with Article 2.2 of the SPS Agreement. Paraguay stressed the importance of plant protection tools for food security and noted that EU member States themselves had highlighted risks associated with the loss of viable alternatives. It urged the European Union to align its regulatory approach with Codex standards and SPS obligations, recalled its earlier communications and additional questions in G/SPS/GEN/2395, and expressed concern over what it viewed as the European Union's unwillingness to engage constructively, warning that this undermined the multilateral trading system. Paraguay reaffirmed its commitment to a rules-based, science-based SPS framework.

4.46. The United States reiterated its concern that the European Union's MRL determination processes relied on hazard-based "cut-off" criteria that reduced MRLs to default levels without considering Codex or EFSA risk assessments, thereby creating unnecessary barriers to trade. The United States noted that notification G/SPS/N/EU/788 on proposed MRL reductions for dithiocarbamates, including mancozeb, remained a concern, and again requested the European Union to reconsider the proposed reductions affecting products such as walnuts. The United States also expressed concern regarding the EU actions notified in document G/SPS/N/EU/802/Add.1 for substances including S-metolachlor on peanuts and chlorpropham on potatoes, which, in its view, did not appear to be supported by completed risk assessments and were likely more trade-restrictive than necessary. The United States stressed the importance of a consistent and transparent regulatory framework to allow growers and exporters to plan production and trade with confidence and urged the European Union to adopt more flexible and transparent transitional arrangements so that agricultural exports compliant with existing MRLs at the time of production remained eligible for entry, particularly for long-storage or processed commodities. The United States submitted its statement in document G/SPS/GEN/2400.

4.47. India stated that EFSA's risk assessments indicated that alpha-cypermethrin did not pose an unacceptable risk to human health when used in line with GAP, which was supported by relevant FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) evaluations. India also indicated that an acceptable daily intake (ADI) of 0-0.02 mg/kg of body weight per day had been established, and that the recommended MRLs covered a broad range of commodities, aligning with international food safety standards. JMPR had further concluded that theoretical dietary exposure to cypermethrin residues remained well below the ADI, indicating a substantial safety margin. Noting that any regulatory decisions should take into account JMPR's comprehensive findings, India requested that the European Union refrain from withdrawing alpha-cypermethrin or further reducing its MRLs without conducting a thorough and transparent risk assessment that reflected these international evaluations.

4.48. Colombia referred to document G/SPS/GEN/2395, submitted with Ecuador, Guatemala and Paraguay, and reiterated its concern regarding the European Union's approach to MRLs and import tolerances. Colombia stressed that any decision in this area had to be fully based on scientific evidence, implemented transparently and provide predictability for trading partners. It remained particularly interested in understanding how decisions to modify MRLs or reject import tolerances would be justified under the SPS Agreement in cases where scientific evaluations confirmed consumer safety. Colombia thanked the European Union for any further clarification on these points.

4.49. Brazil reiterated its concern that the European Union's regulatory policies on MRLs continued to disregard Codex standards and, in its view, contravened Articles 2.2 and 3.1 of the SPS Agreement by failing to base measures on scientific principles and international standards. Brazil stressed that realistic exposure scenarios should inform MRL-setting, rather than an exclusive focus on intrinsic hazard, and underlined the trade impacts of the EU approach, particularly for tropical countries whose production conditions were not reflected in the underlying assessments. Brazil noted that restrictive MRL policies undermined access to safe plant protection tools essential for productivity and global food security. It also considered the procedures applied by the European Union to be excessively trade-restrictive and inconsistent with Article 5.6 of the SPS Agreement. Brazil further highlighted inconsistencies between EU restrictions on imports and the widespread recourse by EU member States to emergency authorizations under Article 53 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009. Brazil urged the European Union to adopt more trade-facilitative approaches when establishing MRLs, including longer transitional periods and opportunities for early and effective engagement with EU competent authorities.

4.50. Ecuador reiterated concerns that the European Union continued lowering MRLs to the level of detection (LOD) for numerous substances essential in tropical agriculture, stressing that tropical pest pressures required MRLs aligned with GAP to ensure sustainable production and food security. Ecuador urged the European Union to rely on Codex standards and JMPR assessments when EFSA could not conclude evaluations, and highlighted that replacing pesticide molecules required long development periods, making adequate transition time crucial. It noted significant impacts from EU non-renewals and LOD-based MRLs, especially for bananas, where effective alternatives were lacking, and emphasized that precautionary limits applied due to missing data did not meet SPS requirements for scientific justification. Ecuador recalled that EU member States could grant emergency authorizations for banned substances and requested equivalent consideration for third-country producers, as well as clear monitoring procedures. It considered EU responses to earlier questions, including those in G/SPS/GEN/2395, insufficient and requested formal replies, and further referred to the concerns specifically expressed with regard to the measures being implemented by France, as discussed under the relevant STC (4.1.1). Ecuador also sought responses regarding imazalil, raised concerns that principles in the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food might further restrict trade, called for targeted technical assistance to help tropical producers to transition, and requested a list of viable substitute molecules and information on EU transition measures consistent with the "European Green Deal".

4.51. Guatemala recalled that it had submitted questions about document G/SPS/GEN/2395 and that it was waiting for relevant replies. It further reiterated its deep concern over MRL changes imposed by the European Union for several active substances. Referring to Articles 2.2 and 5.1 of the SPS Agreement, Guatemala was concerned that reducing MRLs to the LOD or to default levels of 0.01 mg/kg seemed to be the result of internal decisions of non-renewal of approval of certain substances, and not related to the dietary risk associated with residues in imported products. Guatemala recalled that MRLs should be set considering the ADI and the acute reference dose, with the corresponding safety margins. Guatemala further explained that the toxicological evaluations developed by the FAO/WHO JMPR served as international scientific references. Recognizing EFSA's technical role, Guatemala underscored that changes in MRLs should be accompanied by a complete, transparent and specific risk assessment proving that the previous levels did not reach the appropriate level of protection. Guatemala concluded by reiterating its availability for an open dialogue with the European Union on these issues.

4.52. The Dominican Republic reiterated its support to the delegations raising this concern, and recalled that any regulatory changes had to be based on scientific evidence.

4.53. Panama reiterated its concern that certain measures adopted by the European Union, including the reduction of MRLs for substances such as mancozeb, could negatively affect market access for agricultural exports from developing countries, particularly where no viable short-term

alternatives existed. Panama noted that similar concerns had also been raised in the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Committee), given the broader trade implications of such measures. Panama once again encouraged the European Union to consider approaches that could take due account of relevant international standards, including Codex limits, to assess less trade-restrictive alternatives and to ensure that the measures adopted did not impose disproportionate impacts on producers in developing countries.

4.54. Canada supported this concern over the EU regulatory approach to residues in plant protection products, emphasizing the need for science- and risk-based frameworks when setting MRLs, guided by internationally agreed methodologies. Canada encouraged the European Union to align its limits with Codex standards or to maintain existing MRLs for substances where no unacceptable dietary risk had been identified, noting that this would safeguard public health without unnecessarily disrupting trade.

4.55. Uruguay reiterated its concern regarding the European Union's regulatory approach to reducing MRLs for certain active substances, particularly the establishment of MRLs at the LOD in the absence of a conclusive risk assessment. Uruguay emphasized that SPS measures had to be based on scientific principles and appropriate risk assessments in accordance with Articles 2.2 and 5 of the SPS Agreement, and should take into account relevant international standards, notably those of the Codex Alimentarius, to ensure coherence and predictability in international trade. Uruguay encouraged the European Union to continue engaging with Members and to ensure that any regulatory changes were transparent, predictable and supported by adequate transition periods.

4.56. Kenya reiterated its concern regarding the European Union's non-renewal of the approval of mancozeb, noting that the hazard-based "cut-off" criteria applied under the EU regulatory framework, including under the EU chemicals legislation "R.E.A.C.H.", did not align with internationally agreed risk analysis principles and risked resulting in discriminatory effects contrary to Articles 2.1 and 2.3 of the SPS Agreement. Kenya emphasized that mancozeb was a critical fungicide for controlling a wide range of tropical fungal diseases and was essential for major Kenyan crops such as green beans, potatoes, tomatoes, coffee, cut flowers and onions, as well as for managing pesticide resistance, with particular importance for the flower industry, which provided significant employment and contributed significantly to Kenya's income. Kenya considered the measure more trade-restrictive than necessary in violation of Article 5.6 and stressed that it failed to take into account the special needs of developing countries as required under Article 10 of the SPS Agreement. Kenya therefore requested that the European Union review its decision on the non-renewal of mancozeb.

4.57. Argentina reiterated its strong concern regarding the European Union's continued reduction of MRLs to limits of detection without risk assessments based on scientific criteria. Argentina stressed that unilateral EU decisions lacking science-based justification imposed unnecessary and excessive restrictions on agricultural trade, undermined global food security and diverged from Codex risk-based standards. In the interest of time, Argentina referred to its full statement uploaded on eAgenda.

4.58. The European Union took note of the continued interest and concerns raised by Members and recalled that this issue had been discussed in twenty-three consecutive Committee sessions. The EU indicated that, in the interest of time, it would not repeat the detailed explanations already provided at previous meetings, which remained fully valid, and noted that extensive information had also been made available through its dedicated online Q&A page, various thematic sessions and multiple technical exchanges. The European Union reaffirmed its openness to continued dialogue on facilitating trade in products treated with plant protection substances and emphasized that it supported the adoption of numerous Codex MRLs, providing justification where it deviated from international standards. It further noted that, when earlier constraints were resolved, the European Union could adjust its MRLs accordingly, citing the example of its proposal to implement the Codex MRL for imazalil in bananas, as referred to by Ecuador, following a specific EFSA review. The European Union also recalled its notifications regarding alpha cypermethrin and cypermethrin and the revisions made based on Members' comments and updated EFSA assessments. The European Union reiterated its willingness to continue engaging with Members on these matters.

4.2.2 EU legislation on endocrine disruptors (ID 382) - Concerns of Paraguay and Brazil

4.59. Paraguay further reiterated concern over the EU approach to regulating substances with potential endocrine-disrupting properties, stressing that SPS measures had to be based on conclusive, science-based risk assessments consistent with international standards. Paraguay remained particularly worried about the European Union's reliance on a hazard-based "cut-off" approach that, in its view, departed from relevant Codex principles and even from EFSA's own findings. It took note of EFSA's ongoing reassessment of thiacloprid, with results expected only in 2027, and again urged the European Union to consider information from specialized international bodies and to ground its decisions in robust scientific evidence and assessments of real risks, in line with SPS obligations.

4.60. Brazil reiterated its concern regarding the European Union's implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009, stressing that criteria for identifying endocrine-disrupting substances had to be established in accordance with Article 5 of the SPS Agreement and based on scientific principles and available evidence. Brazil warned that approaches relying solely on hazard perception risked creating unnecessary trade restrictions by classifying substances as endocrine disruptors without appropriate risk assessment. It emphasized that assessments had to be conducted in a manner appropriate to the circumstances under Article 5.1 of the SPS Agreement and that requests for additional information did not have to serve as a justification for adopting trade-restrictive measures.

4.61. Ecuador reiterated concern over the European Union's use of endocrine-disruptor considerations in regulatory decisions, stressing that SPS measures had to comply with Article 5 of the SPS Agreement and be based on rigorous, science-based risk assessments to avoid disguised trade restrictions. Ecuador was particularly concerned that presumed endocrine-disrupting effects were being used as grounds for non-approval of substances such as dimethoate, and noted the prolonged uncertainty created by EFSA's ongoing assessment of thiacloprid, with conclusions expected only in August 2027. Ecuador called on the European Union to provide clear and up-to-date information on the criteria, methodologies and timelines applied in these evaluations and urged that any resulting measures be grounded in solid, transparent scientific evidence, aligned with relevant international standards and promptly communicated to the Committee.

4.62. Guatemala reiterated concern over the European Union's approach to identifying substances with potential endocrine-disrupting properties under Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 and relevant regulations, noting that decisions affecting MRLs should be based on conclusive, science-based risk assessments rather than hazard-based criteria that disregarded actual dietary exposure. Guatemala observed that EFSA opinions often remained inconclusive, yet automatic reductions of MRLs to detection limits functioned as *de facto* zero-tolerance policies without quantitative evidence of consumer risk. It recalled that JMPR evaluations provided internationally relevant science-based reference values and stressed that, in tropical agroecological conditions, certain active substances were essential for integrated pest management. Guatemala highlighted that sudden loss of these tools—without technically and economically viable alternatives—could undermine productivity, increase post-harvest losses and disproportionately affect its exports of tropical fruits and vegetables, especially those produced by small and medium-scale growers. In the interest of time, Guatemala further referred to its statement uploaded on eAgenda.

4.63. Canada reiterated its call for the European Union to revise its hazard-based approach for regulating active substances in plant protection products and to consider both hazards and risks in its regulatory decision-making. Canada noted that hazard-based approaches could be more trade-restrictive than required and lead to unnecessary losses of vital plant protection products. Canada urged the European Union to apply internationally recognized risk-assessment methodologies when establishing MRLs. Canada further stressed that in the contemporary global environment, marked by heightened geopolitical pressures and growing concerns over food security, predictable, science-based regulatory approaches were essential. Strengthening cooperation and maintaining open, rules-based trade would help ensure resilient supply chains and would support the shared objective of a secure global food system.

4.64. Uruguay reiterated its concern regarding the European Union's approach to identifying and regulating substances with potential endocrine disrupting properties, noting in particular that some EU decisions appeared to rely primarily on hazard-based criteria without adequately considering

exposure and the actual probability of risk. Uruguay recalled that, under the SPS Agreement, SPS measures had to be based on conclusive risk assessments and scientific evidence and had to be not more trade restrictive than necessary to achieve the appropriate level of protection. Uruguay encouraged continued attention to these principles in the European Union's regulatory decision making.

4.65. Having taken note of the EU statement that scientific criteria for identifying endocrine disruptors in plant protection products had been applicable since 2018, Kenya reiterated its concern regarding this regulation. Kenya urged the European Union to provide the scientific justification for reductions in MRLs, specifically based on actual health risks to consumers rather than potential hazard identification. Kenya noted that the EU hazard-based cut-off criteria, including those related to endocrine disruption, were not incorporated into Regulation (EC) 396/2005 and observed that Regulation (EC) 1107/2009 did not apply risk analysis principles. Concerned about the EU hazard-based approach to regulating plant protection products and setting import tolerances, Kenya shared its view that the regulation could create unnecessary barriers to trade, potentially contravening Articles 2.2 and 2.3 of the SPS Agreement. Kenya called on the European Union to reconsider its methodology, urging that SPS measures be grounded in scientific evidence and actual risk assessments.

4.66. The European Union took note of the continued interest of Members regarding its provisions on endocrine disruptors and referred to its previous explanations on this topic, confirming that its earlier statements remained fully valid. The European Union indicated that it had no new information or updates to provide concerning endocrine disruptors in general or the active substance thiacloprid in particular, which was separately discussed under another STC raised by India (EU non-renewal of the approval of the active substance thiacloprid (ID 585) - Concerns of India and Brazil). The European Union reiterated its readiness to further clarify any aspects of this issue in continued dialogue with Members.

4.2.3 EU import tolerances for certain pesticides to achieve environmental outcomes in third countries (ID 534) - Concerns of Australia, the United States, India and Brazil

4.67. Australia reiterated its concern that the European Union continued using MRLs to pursue environmental objectives rather than food-safety, noting that MRLs should be risk-based and not proxies for regulating environmental issues in third countries. Australia regretted that substantive discussions took place only after the Regulation was implemented and stressed that trade-restrictive MRL reductions lacking exposure-based risk assessments were inconsistent with the SPS Agreement. It emphasized that environmental conditions and pesticide-use practices vary across countries and that assumptions about global impacts, such as pollinator decline, cannot be extrapolated to all contexts. Australia also expressed concern over the European Union's Omnibus Proposal, joined other Members in questioning amendments to Regulation (EC) 396/2005, and requested clarification on the methodology for individual impact assessments. It further highlighted perceived inconsistencies between the European Union's expectations of third countries and EU member States' use of emergency authorizations, and encouraged updated guidance in light of the Court of Justice ruling in case C−162/21. Australia reaffirmed support for multilateral cooperation on environmental and pollinator-health issues and noted its intention to participate in the EU impact-assessment study launched in November 2025.

4.68. The United States reiterated its disappointment with the European Union's limited substantive engagement on Commission Regulation 2023/334, which reduced MRLs for clothianidin and thiamethoxam to the limit of quantification for environmental reasons linked to agricultural practices in third countries. The United States urged the European Union to refrain from using MRLs to pursue policy objectives unrelated to food safety and to limit their use to monitoring lawful pesticide applications and ensuring consumer protection. It acknowledged the European Union's environmental goals but stressed that measures falling under the SPS Agreement had to remain grounded in protecting human, animal or plant life or health, regardless of additional objectives. The United States encouraged the European Union to adopt approaches that support sustainable global pest management rather than restrict access to essential tools without providing viable alternatives for farmers. The United States submitted its statement in document G/SPS/GEN/2402.

4.69. India remained concerned that the reduction of MRLs for certain pesticides, particularly neonicotinoids, appeared to be driven by environmental objectives rather than a science-based risk

assessment aligned with Codex standards. India explained that the proposed reduction to the limit of quantification would significantly impact its tea exports. Underscoring that the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) did not factor environmental concerns in setting MRLs, India urged the European Union to ensure that MRL measures were science-based, aligned with Codex, and developed through transparent consultation with trading partners to identify less trade-restrictive alternatives, thus avoiding impacts on farmers in developing countries.

4.70. Brazil reiterated concern that the European Union was using MRLs to pursue unilateral environmental objectives rather than food-safety purposes, creating extraterritorial effects inconsistent with Annex A of the SPS Agreement and disproportionately affecting developing-country producers. Brazil stressed that Codex viewed MRLs as consumer-safety tools and that applying them as environmental instruments risked creating unjustified trade barriers, including potential prohibitions on Brazilian citrus if any neonicotinoid residues were detected. Brazil noted that Brazil's own pesticide-approval system already incorporated strict environmental assessments and urged the European Union to avoid unnecessary barriers and ensure its measures remained consistent with multilateral rules.

4.71. Japan reiterated its concerns about the EU reduction of MRLs for clothianidin and thiamethoxam to protect the environment, applicable since 7 March 2026. Japan stated that the EU measure was a deviation from current MRL-setting principles and harmonized MRLs. Underscoring the importance of respecting each country's regulatory decisions, Japan urged the European Union to refrain from judging the appropriateness of pesticide use in other countries, through the application of measures taken within the European Union.

4.72. Guatemala reiterated its concern that the European Union was using MRLs and import tolerances to pursue environmental objectives extraterritorially, despite MRLs being risk-management tools designed solely to protect consumer health. Guatemala stressed that reducing or eliminating MRLs to influence agricultural practices abroad - particularly when EFSA's own assessments identified no unacceptable consumer risk - blurred the distinction between dietary-risk evaluation and environmental-risk assessment, which relied on different scientific parameters. It cautioned that such measures disproportionately impacted tropical developing-country exporters whose pest pressures were higher and whose access to alternatives was limited, and noted additional concern over the EU emergency-authorization regime, which could afford domestic producers flexibility not available to third-country exporters, potentially conflicting with Article 2.3 of the SPS Agreement. Guatemala emphasized that MRL decisions had to be based on conclusive consumer-risk assessments; remain coherent with their regulatory purpose; avoid unnecessary trade restrictiveness; and ensure non-discrimination. Guatemala reaffirmed its commitment to constructive dialogue that protected pollinators and biodiversity without using food-safety instruments for environmental purposes in ways that could create disproportionate burdens for developing-country producers. Guatemala referred to its full statement included in eAgenda.

4.73. Canada reiterated its concerns regarding the EU integration of environmental objectives into its process for establishing MRLs, which led to regulatory uncertainty and risked trade disruption. Canada emphasized that its strong, science-based regulatory framework ensured safe use of pesticides while protecting pollinators. In Canada's view, the EU MRL-decisions failed to meet the obligation to apply the least trade-restrictive measures stipulated in the SPS Agreement, diverged from the internationally accepted risk-assessment process of Codex, and might unnecessarily hinder international trade. Canada cautioned that removing plant protection tools without viable alternatives could lead to more frequent use of less desirable active substances. Canada requested the European Union to clarify how the recent EU regulatory developments were consistent with WTO obligations and to explain how the implementation of its "Vision for the Future of Agriculture and Food" would avoid unnecessary barriers to trade.

4.74. Uruguay reiterated its concern that the European Union was using MRLs to pursue environmental objectives outside its territory, effectively applying EU production standards to third countries without considering differing agricultural practices. While acknowledging the importance of protecting the environment and pollinators, Uruguay stressed that MRLs were food-safety instruments that should not be used to regulate extraterritorial environmental impacts. It noted that such an approach raised questions about consistency with the SPS Agreement, particularly the requirements that measures be based on scientific evidence and appropriate risk assessments.

4.75. Kenya reiterated concerns that the European Union's decisions to lower or withdraw MRLs for certain pesticides appeared to extend EU environmental policies beyond its jurisdiction, with significant implications for agricultural trade and development in exporting countries. Kenya noted that several EU import-tolerance requirements diverged from Codex standards and internationally recognized scientific risk assessments, relying instead on environmental or precautionary grounds rather than consumer-risk evaluations, raising questions under Articles 2.2 and 5.1 of the SPS Agreement. Kenya highlighted the potential trade impacts for its horticultural exports, including increased uncertainty, consignment rejections and income loss for smallholder farmers. It urged the European Union to consider the special needs of developing countries under Article 12.3 of the SPS Agreement, provide adequate consultation and transition periods, align import tolerances with Codex standards and complement its environmental objectives with capacity-building support that could help developing countries adopt safer and sustainable pest-management practices.

4.76. Ecuador reiterated concern over the European Union's use of environmental justifications to impose non-tariff measures that, in its view, disregarded the legitimacy of other Members' regulatory systems and resulted in highly restrictive MRLs - set at analytical detection limits - for key tropical exports such as fruit, coffee and cocoa, amounting in practice to a *de facto* market closure. Ecuador stressed that import tolerances were essential to maintain trade and had to reflect origin-specific production conditions, and urged the European Union to provide effective technical and financial support to help developing countries meet tolerance-request procedures. Ecuador further considered that the EU approach could contravene core SPS obligations, including non-discrimination, transparency, scientific justification, reliance on international standards and facilitative control and approval procedures. Ecuador encouraged constructive dialogue to ensure full consistency with the SPS Agreement and reaffirmed its readiness to cooperate on balanced solutions that protected health and the environment without creating unjustified barriers to trade.

4.77. Argentina reiterated its support for this long-standing concern, now raised for the thirteenth consecutive Committee meeting, emphasizing the broad relevance Members attached to the issue. Argentina expressed particular concern that the European Union was applying unilateral and extraterritorial measures – using MRLs for environmental purposes - without considering equivalent regulatory frameworks or production realities in exporting countries. It stressed that MRLs, including those established by Codex, were food-safety tools intended to protect human health, not instruments for environmental protection, and noted that pollinator decline was a multicausal phenomenon in which neonicotinoid use, when managed under GAP adapted to local conditions, could be safe. Argentina considered that EU measures lacking globally accepted scientific justification were neither effective nor efficient and imposed unnecessary and disproportionate restrictions on developing-country exporters. It urged the European Union to reconsider its approach in light of WTO rules and to respect Members' regulatory autonomy and international standards.

4.78. Paraguay reiterated that MRLs were food-safety tools and should not be used to pursue environmental objectives extraterritorially, expressing concern that the EU reductions of MRLs for substances such as clothianidin and thiamethoxam effectively imposed EU standards on third-country production systems and resulted in unjustified barriers that severely restricted export opportunities despite residues posing no risk to EU pollinators. Paraguay stressed that GAP could effectively mitigate pollinator risks and noted that several EU member States themselves relied heavily on emergency authorizations - despite a 2023 ruling of the Court of Justice - due to the lack of viable alternatives. It reiterated concerns about the lack of transparency regarding EU emergency-authorization procedures and their costs, and emphasized that developing countries could not access comparable flexibilities, placing their exporters at a disadvantage. Paraguay referred to the examples made on the same issues at past Committee meetings, noted that import-tolerance procedures were lengthy, complex and costly for developing countries, and that even when EFSA supported an import tolerance, the EU could still reject it for political reasons. It requested clarification on how import tolerances for neonicotinoids would be treated under the EU Omnibus Proposal, which sought to eliminate import tolerances for hazardous substances, and urged the European Union to engage in constructive dialogue and reconsider its approach.

4.79. Chile expressed concern regarding the European Union's Regulation 2023/334, noting that the reduction of MRLs did not, in its view, appropriately contribute to the regulation's stated objectives. Chile urged the European Union to reconsider its approach and to pursue scientifically grounded and economically sustainable solutions to achieve its environmental goals without creating unjustified repercussions for agricultural trade.

4.80. Costa Rica reiterated its support for this concern and expressed serious unease over the systemic implications of the European Union's decision to use MRLs as a tool to pursue environmental objectives in third countries, noting that this approach resulted in unjustified market-access restrictions for exporters and lacked adequate technical grounding under the SPS Agreement. Costa Rica urged the European Union to reconsider its regulatory approach in light of its obligations under the SPS Agreement.

4.81. The European Union took note of Members' continued interest in this issue and recalled its previous explanations, which remained fully valid. The European Union reiterated that it considered global environmental concerns, including the documented worldwide decline of pollinators, when setting MRLs for substances no longer approved in the European Union, and applied a case-by-case assessment based on the best available scientific evidence to ensure measures were not more trade-restrictive than necessary. It explained that, on this basis, all MRLs for clothianidin and thiamethoxam were lowered to the LOD, as these neonicotinoids were considered to contribute significantly to pollinator decline regardless of geographical location. The European Union noted that the draft measure had been notified to the TBT Committee and to the SPS Committee for information, that all comments received had been addressed, and that Regulation 2023/334 was adopted with an extended 36-month transition period, during which products already placed on the market could continue to be sold. The European Union stressed that the Regulation did not require third countries to ban these substances domestically, but ensured that food entering the European Union complied with EU MRLs. It maintained that no less trade-restrictive alternative would achieve the same level of pollinator protection and confirmed its readiness to continue discussions with interested Members.

4.2.4 EU regulation No 396/2005 setting pesticide MRLs in food and feed of plant and animal origin (ID 549) - Concerns of India

4.82. India referred to the EU notification G/SPS/N/EU/804, which temporarily increased official controls and emergency measures governing imports into the European Union. India appreciated the removal of increased physical checks on certain Indian goods such as sesamum seed and food supplements for ethylene oxide, but was still concerned over the increased control frequency on a wide range of Indian agricultural and food products - including okra, cumin seeds, betel leaves, drumsticks, yard-long beans, tamarind-containing foods, vanilla, cloves, Indian curry leaves, groundnuts, peanut butter, peppers, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and saffron - under Annexes I and II of the notified regulations. India noted concerns about the proportionality of measures, which had not been similarly applied to other trading partners with higher instances of non-compliance, and sought further clarification about the nature and duration of the controls. India was of the view that the measures were at odds with Articles 2.2 and 2.3 of the Agreement, and proposed holding technical consultations with the European Union to ensure that sampling frequencies and controls were in line with SPS obligations.

4.83. The European Union took note of India's continued interest and recalled that Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/1793 established lists of food and feed of non-animal origin subject to special conditions or increased official controls to address known or emerging risks or serious non-compliances. The European Union noted that these lists were reviewed at intervals not exceeding six months and that the most recent amendment was adopted in January 2026, with India informed in advance and through the subsequent SPS notification. The European Union referred to earlier explanations on how increased controls were applied and emphasized that the same approach was used for all trading partners. It underlined that Indian authorities were regularly notified of non-compliances through the Rapid Alert System and bilateral contacts, and that technical meetings were organized to monitor implementation of EU food and feed safety requirements. The European Union confirmed its readiness to provide India with detailed information on sampling frequencies and official controls at the bilateral level.

4.2.5 EU non-renewal of the approval of the active substance thiacloprid (ID 585) - Concerns of India and Brazil

4.84. Recalling its previous statements, India reiterated its concerns regarding the EU non-renewal of the approval of the active substance thiacloprid in tea and the lowering of its MRLs to the LOD, which disregarded Codex standards, lacked scientific evidence, and appeared inconsistent with Article 5.6 of the SPS Agreement. India regretted the lowering of the thiacloprid MRL for tea

from 10 mg/kg to 0.01 mg/kg, despite EFSA's finding that the limit did not identify any consumer health risk, and argued that it would lead to crop losses and severely affect tea exports to the European Union. India requested the European Union to maintain the Codex MRLs until a conclusive toxicological assessment was completed, to avoid applying default MRLs to tea inconsistent with its own guidance, to meaningfully consider the inputs of international stakeholders in its decision-making process, to adopt a more balanced approach without imposing excessive trade restrictions, and to provide reasonable transition periods. Additionally, India sought clarification on the number of applications for import tolerances for thiacloprid that had been submitted to date under Regulation (EC) 396/2005, requesting an update on their status. India also wished to understand whether a fast-track process or specific guidance existed for exporters from developing countries to facilitate compliance.

4.85. Brazil reiterated that SPS measures related to MRLs had to be firmly grounded in scientific principles and aligned with the principle of harmonization to prevent protectionist effects that distort international trade. Brazil urged the European Union to take Codex standards into account when setting MRLs or prohibiting active substances, and encouraged the European Union to review its procedures to ensure that they were based on proper risk analysis consistent with Article 5 of the SPS Agreement. Brazil stressed that unilateral approaches undermined the multilateral trading system and should be avoided.

4.86. Guatemala expressed support for the concerns raised by Brazil and India regarding the European Union's non-renewal of thiacloprid, noting that although EFSA's assessment had identified reproductive-toxicity concerns, groundwater-contamination risks and uncertainties for pollinators, the resulting EU decision to reduce MRLs - often to the LOD - had significant implications for agricultural trade, particularly for developing tropical countries facing high pest pressures and limited alternatives. Guatemala stressed that SPS measures had to be based on sufficiently supported risk assessments in line with Article 5 of the SPS Agreement and not be more trade-restrictive than necessary, and underscored the importance of harmonization with Codex standards under Article 3 of the SPS Agreement, to avoid regulatory divergence. It invited the European Union to provide further scientific and technical information underpinning its decisions and to take into account the production and phytosanitary conditions of developing countries to avoid disproportionate impacts on their exports. Guatemala indicated that it followed this matter closely.

4.87. Paraguay thanked the delegations raising this concern and requested that its support be recorded, reiterating the comments it had already presented under STC EU legislation on endocrine disruptors (ID 382) - Concerns of Paraguay and Brazil.

4.88. Referring to discussions on thiacloprid held in STC EU legislation on endocrine disruptors (ID 382) - Concerns of Paraguay and Brazil, the European Union stated that no further information was available since the last Committee meeting. The European Union remained open to further contacts with Members to provide any information they may require to clarify this issue.

4.2.6 European Union - Maximum residue limits of pesticides (ID 306) - Concerns of India

4.89. India reiterated its concern over the EU practice of setting MRLs for pesticides at the LOD, and shared the view that EU measures were inconsistent with Articles 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 5.1, and 5.4 of the SPS Agreement. India was of the view that the EU approach on tricyclazole disregarded EFSA's 2023 conclusion and failed to consider Codex's efforts to set more balanced MRLs. India asked the European Union to provide updates on other pesticides of concern, including acequinocyl, carbendazim, cyfluthrin, and imidacloprid, and to adopt science-based, transparent, and proportionate measures consistent with the WTO SPS Agreement.

4.90. Costa Rica reiterated its support for this long-standing concern, noting that it was well documented in STC EU MRLs for alpha-cypermethrin, buprofezin, chlorothalonil, chlorpyrifos, chlorpyrifos-methyl, cypermethrin, diflubenzuron, ethoxysulfuron, glufosinate, imazalil, ioxynil, iprodione, mancozeb, molinate, picoxystrobin and tepraloxydim (ID 448 - See also related STCs ID 453, 454, 457, 474, 475, 517) - Concerns of Paraguay, the United States, India, Colombia and Brazil and related discussions. Costa Rica emphasized that the European Union's approach to MRLs diverged from the principles of the SPS Agreement and from the guidance of relevant international bodies, particularly Codex MRLs. It urged the European Union to review its regulatory approach to ensure full alignment with SPS disciplines and to consider measures that mitigate the negative

impacts its MRL policy could have on agricultural production, trade for third countries and global food security.

4.91. The European Union took note of the continued interest shown by India and Costa Rica regarding tricyclazole and other substances and indicated that it had no new developments or updates to report on this matter since the previous meeting.

4.2.7 EU restrictions on spice imports and other food products due to European Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/2246 of 15 December 2021 (ID 533) - Concerns of India

4.92. India had taken note that Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/3153 introduced ethylene oxide (EtO) MRLs of 0.02 mg/kg for chili and ginger and 0.1 mg/kg for other spices, and expressed concerns about the regulatory inconsistencies resulting from the lack of harmonization of MRLs for chili and ginger to 0.1 mg/kg. India argued that while Article 66 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 allowed re-dispatch, some EU member States mandated the destruction of the non-compliant consignment. This occurred despite Indian authorities providing a written assurance that such consignments would not be re-exported to the European Union, which had resulted in financial losses and trade disruption. India asked the European Union to provide the scientific justification and risk assessment for deviating from international standards and to harmonize the EtO MRL to 0.1 mg/kg for all spices, including chili and ginger, and to permit re-dispatch of non-compliant consignments.

4.93. The European Union reiterated that EtO was classified as a mutagen, carcinogen and reproductive toxicant and was not permitted in food or feed placed on the EU market, noting that any level of consumer exposure was considered a potential health risk and that numerous Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) notifications involved EtO-treated products originating in third countries. The European Union explained that Implementing Regulation 2019/1793 subjected certain non-animal food and feed to increased controls or special conditions to address known or emerging risks or widespread non-compliances, with the lists reviewed at least every six months, and highlighted that India had been informed in advance of the most recent amendment and the subsequent SPS notification G/SPS/N/EU/913. The European Union drew attention to its guidance on handling non-compliant consignments, recalled ongoing communication with Indian authorities through the Rapid Alert System and regular bilateral contacts, and confirmed its readiness to continue technical discussions with India on sampling frequencies, official controls and other aspects of the regulatory framework.

4.2.8 Thailand's new regulation to mitigate presence of aflatoxins in peanut kernels (G/SPS/N/THA/216/Add.1) (ID 606) - Concerns of India

4.94. India reiterated its view that measures introduced in Thailand's draft agricultural standard to mitigate aflatoxin presence in peanut imports (G/SPS/N/THA/216/Add.1) might create unnecessary restrictions to trade. India urged Thailand to clearly define and notify risk-based criteria for country classification and to ensure these assessments were regularly reviewed, aligning with Articles 2.2 and 5.6 of the SPS Agreement. Advocating for the use of less trade-restrictive measures, India called for a postponement of the implementation of the draft standard until the inspection mechanism was reviewed. India reaffirmed its commitment to a collaborative dialogue and requested Thailand to engage constructively with trading partners.

4.95. Thailand thanked India for raising the concern and reiterated that aflatoxins were WHO- and IARC-classified human carcinogens for which no safe threshold existed, noting that Thailand's national standard set maximum levels for total aflatoxins in raw dried peanut kernels to protect consumer health. Thailand explained that repeated instances of non-compliance in imports from certain partners led it to introduce a risk-based control measure, duly notified under the SPS Agreement, whereby exporting countries were assigned to three risk categories based on historical results and subject to increased sampling when non-compliance exceeded established thresholds. Thailand considered the measure proportionate and consistent with Articles 2.2 and 5.6 of the SPS Agreement, and expressed readiness to continue discussions with India to support mutual understanding and facilitate safe trade.

4.2.9 EU review of legislation on veterinary medicinal products (ID 446) - Concerns of the United States and Brazil

4.96. The United States reiterated concern that the European Union's implementation of Article 118 could create unnecessary negative trade impacts on US exports, noting that despite repeated requests, the European Union had not provided a risk assessment justifying restrictions on products derived from animals treated with antimicrobials, nor an evidence-based rationale for limiting the use of non-medically important antimicrobials for growth promotion. The United States considered that Article 118 did not reflect a science- and risk-based approach and was not aligned with relevant Codex guidance on combatting antimicrobial resistance. It again urged the European Union to adopt a risk-based framework and to exempt low-risk animal products, such as US natural casings, from Article 118 and related acts, and expressed its readiness to continue engagement to avoid unnecessary trade disruptions. The United States submitted its statement in document G/SPS/GEN/2399.

4.97. Brazil reiterated its concern, shared by other Members, regarding the European Union's Regulation 2019/6 on veterinary medicinal products, noting that its implementation imposed significant burdens on producers in third countries by restricting the use of veterinary drugs and introducing sanitary requirements that Brazil considered more trade-restrictive than necessary. Brazil stressed that its concern did not relate to global efforts to address AMR, which it fully supported, but rather to the regulation's complexity and certification cost, the impracticability of the proposed twenty-four-month transition period and the lack of scientific basis, transparency and predictability surrounding future revisions of the EU list of reserved antimicrobials. Brazil reiterated that harmonized, science-based rules for trade in animal products were essential for food safety, food security and public health, and urged the European Union to align its AMR-related legislation with WOAH and Codex recommendations.

4.98. Noting the shared view that AMR represented a serious public concern, Canada reiterated its concern that the EU veterinary medicinal products regulation imposed an undue and costly administrative burden on agricultural producers, food processors, and trading partners. Canada underscored the importance of scientific evidence and a risk-proportionate approach in regulatory development, to ensure measures were not more trade-restrictive than necessary.

4.99. Uruguay reiterated its concern regarding the European Union's implementation of legislation on veterinary medicinal products and the implications this could have for exporting countries. While supporting efforts to combat AMR and promote responsible use of veterinary medicines, Uruguay stressed that SPS measures had to be based on scientific evidence and appropriate risk assessments. It emphasized that, consistent with the SPS Agreement, requirements applied to third countries should not impose disproportionate administrative burdens or costs that could result in unnecessary restrictions on trade, particularly for developing countries. Uruguay encouraged the European Union to reconsider its current approach and reaffirmed its willingness to continue technical dialogue on this matter.

4.100. Paraguay thanked the delegations for raising this concern and asked that its support be duly recorded.

4.101. The European Union noted that this concern had been raised for the twenty-first time and recalled that it had regularly informed WTO Members since the first notification of its veterinary medicinal products framework, including through SPS notifications, information sessions, bilateral exchanges and a dedicated website. The European Union confirmed that Commission Delegated Regulation 2023/905, setting detailed import requirements under Article 118 of Regulation 2019/6, would apply from 3 September 2026, and emphasized that no new information was available beyond what had already been shared in previous meetings, which would be made available in eAgenda.

4.2.10 Hong Kong, China; Macao, China; Russian Federation – Import restrictions on aquatic products after the discharge of ALPS treated water (ID 574) - Concerns of Japan

4.102. Japan considered that the measures restricting imports of Japanese aquatic and other products imposed by Hong Kong, China; Macao, China; and the Russian Federation in response to Japan's discharge of water treated by the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) into the sea

were not based on scientific principles and were completely unacceptable. The results of evaluation and monitoring conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had concluded that the discharge of water was consistent with relevant international safety standards and would have a negligible radiological impact. Japan stated that most countries had expressed their understanding regarding the discharge of ALPS treated water due to the efforts of Japan and the IAEA and had not imposed import restrictions, and urged Hong Kong, China; Macao, China; and the Russian Federation to lift the imposed measures. Japan would continue to cooperate closely with the IAEA and to share transparent, evidence-based information on this issue to interested partners.

4.103. Underscoring its responsibility to safeguard food safety and public health, Hong Kong, China stated that its import control measures were precautionary and based on scientific data and factual information, and that it would continue to monitor developments and maintain communication with Japan.

4.104. Noting Japan's continued interest in exporting aquatic products to its market, the Russian Federation reiterated its concerns regarding the safety of Japanese fish exports in light of the ongoing discharge of ALPS-treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. It recalled that since August 2023 approximately 133,000 m³ of treated water had been released into the Pacific Ocean and stressed that, in its view, the future effects on human, animal and ecosystem health could not be reliably assessed. Citing insufficient scientific evidence and acting in accordance with Article 5.7 of the SPS Agreement, the Russian Federation confirmed that it would maintain the restrictions introduced in 2023 on the certification of Japanese-origin aquatic products.

4.105. Japan reiterated that information on ALPS-treated water had been shared in a transparent manner based on scientific evidence. Japan had also provided individual briefings to interested parties, and highlighted its availability to continue engaging in good faith with interested partners on these issues.

4.2.11 India's Draft Food Safety and Standards (Import) Amendment Regulation (ID 553) - Concerns of the European Union

4.106. The European Union thanked India for the guidance provided on the registration of facilities and noted that, while trade had not yet been disrupted, it remained concerned about potential future trade impacts arising from a lack of clarity and delays in the listing process. The European Union highlighted the absence of specific criteria for inspections and audits of exporting countries and for defining risks and procedures related to listing or delisting facilities. It requested further guidance from India on these elements, as well as clarification on procedures for updating facility lists, and reiterated its request that India notify any amendments or new measures on facility registration to the WTO SPS and TBT Committees for transparency purposes.

4.107. India advised stakeholders to register or update their facilities through the online portal in advance, preferably 30 days prior to the shipment, as communicated through an order of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) dated 4 April 2024. With regard to inspections and audits, India clarified that, at present, the inspection of foreign food manufacturing facilities was not mandatory. In cases where inspections might be undertaken, based on risk assessment or other relevant factors, the concerned exporting countries would be duly informed and notified in advance of the inspection requirements and procedures. India reaffirmed its commitment to transparency, international cooperation, and constructive engagement to address trading partners' concerns in a timely and effective manner.

4.2.12 EU restrictions on the importation of collagen for human consumption (ID 535) - Concerns of China

4.108. In raising this concern, China noted that, according to Regulation (EU) 2021/405, the European Union allowed imports of collagen from livestock, poultry, farmed rabbits, and aquatic products. At the same time, the European Union prohibited the import of Chinese collagen on the grounds that it was not listed in the annex of EU Commission Decision 2002/994/EC. Appreciating the EU recognition of the positive trend of the residue monitoring system, China noted that the European Union had reached definitive conclusions of the eligibility of China's collagen for export to the European Union without requiring residue monitoring. Reiterating concerns from previous Committee meetings, China requested the European Union to include Chinese collagen in the annex

of Regulation 2002/994/EC or to clarify the specific procedures and channels for the export of Chinese collagen pending the completion of the revision of the Regulation. Reiterating that the General Administration of Customs of China was the competent authority regarding this concern, China expressed its readiness for technical consultations and information exchange with the European Union.

4.109. The European Union clarified that EU Commission Decision 2002/994/EC, as last amended by Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2015/1068, applied to all products of animal origin imported from China and intended for human consumption or animal feed use. The European Union underlined that articles 2 and 3 of this Decision indicated possible derogations, which were included in the annex. Since not included among the possible exceptions (part I and II of the annexes to the relevant decision), collagen from China was not authorized for importation. The European Union also referred to an audit carried out in China in 2023, which had documented an encouraging trend of controls. The European Union remained available to continue dialogue through bilateral channels.

4.2.13 India's Order related to requirement of health certificate accompanied with imported food consignment of milk, pork, fish and related products (ID 554) - Concerns of the European Union

4.110. The European Union was of the view that the import requirements established in India's veterinary health certificate for various animal products went beyond international standards, in particular the WOAH Terrestrial Code. Acknowledging the recent WTO notification, the European Union sought clarification on when India would provide responses to the comments submitted. The European Union asked India to align its import requirements to international standards and, when alignments were not possible, to share the scientific justification for the deviations. Recalling the obligations established in the SPS Agreement, the European Union stressed the importance of providing sufficient time for the implementation of the new certificates.

4.111. Australia reiterated requests for India to reconsider proposed changes to bilaterally agreed certification arrangements for pork, fish and related products. In cases where it was deemed necessary to update certification, Australia encouraged India to align with best practices as outlined by Codex to ensure consistency and transparency. Australia also requested India to remain open to certification submissions that achieved equivalent food safety outcomes, including those leveraging the use of new technologies, and to reduce duplication of information that increased the burden on exporters. Australia sought confirmation that any future certification negotiations would include meaningful consultation and appropriate transitional arrangements, and requested that existing certification remain valid under revised certificates where jointly agreed. Reaffirming its commitment to working collaboratively with India, Australia indicated that it would welcome the opportunity for early engagement on the technical requirements for certification and for close coordination with all agencies involved. Australia remained committed to working collaboratively with India to address these matters constructively.

4.112. Japan reiterated its concerns about India's Order on health certificate requirements for imported milk, pork, fish, and related products. Japan urged India to revise milk product certification to align with international standards, noting that some provisions were stricter than those applied to domestic producers. Given the impact of the measures on international trade, Japan requested that India notify the Order to the Committee. In addition, Japan called for full alignment of future drafts of new health certificates for pork, fish, and related products with international standards and India's own domestic regulations. Acknowledging India's extension of the implementation timeline, Japan underscored the importance of providing at least a six-month transition period for exporters to adapt their certification system. Thanking India for its response to the request to initiate technical consultations on the health certificate for milk and milk products, Japan noted that it would provide a draft certificate for India's review and looked forward to constructive and science-based exchanges on this matter.

4.113. Canada acknowledged India's decision to delay implementation of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)'s new certification requirements until further notice, giving sufficient time to India's competent authorities to develop joint certificates. Canada further reiterated its concern with a number of new FSSAI requirements and implored India to streamline certification requirements based on international standards. Canada further requested India to notify these requirements to the Committee because of the nature of the measure.

4.114. Recalling its previous statements, Switzerland regretted that the integrated Swiss certificate was still under internal review by FFSAI, despite the acknowledgement that it met relevant food safety requirements. Switzerland noted that the lack of information created uncertainty for Swiss producers and prevented compliance with new requirements, and asked for an update on the status of the ongoing review and the expected timeline for final decision.

4.115. India reaffirmed that the measure was based on scientific risk assessment, and was considered essential to safeguard public health. India added that a sufficient transition period had been provided, several Members had already adopted the certificates facilitating uninterrupted trade, and no systemic delays or denials in registration had been reported. India indicated that it remained open to addressing specific, evidence-based concerns, and invited Members to share specific instances to enable focused examination through the appropriate channels. India emphasized that the protection of public health remained a paramount objective.

4.2.14 Concerns on the US FDA Import Alert 99-30 regarding the detention of milk products and melamine testing (ID 582) - Concerns of China

4.116. China reiterated its concern over Import Alert 99-30 issued by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which imposed detention without physical examination measures on all milk products, milk-derived ingredients and milk-containing finished food products from China, excluding those from 40 "Green List" enterprises exempted from the requirement. To release detained shipments, exporters were required to submit melamine test results or documentation proving the absence of milk-derived ingredients, with failure resulting in refusal of entry. China highlighted that the European Union and Singapore had lifted similar restrictions, and regretted that the United States maintained its measures, which were inconsistent with Article 5.5 of the SPS Agreement. In its view, the US established internal tolerable level for melamine in milk powder was discriminatory against Chinese products, resulting in unjustified economic losses and increased clearance times. China had enacted its Food Safety Law in 2009 to prohibit the intentional addition of melamine to food, and further confirmed that all affected enterprises strictly complied with raw material inspection requirements. Acknowledging one recent addition to the "Green List", China stated that the core issue remained unresolved. Referring to its statements in previous meetings, which remained valid, China insisted that it had repeatedly provided the relevant laws, regulations, and standards on the supervision of milk products. China requested the United States to recognize China's efforts to ensure food safety, to revoke Import Alert 99-30, and to discontinue detention measures for related products, to resume normal imports. Looking forward to continued cooperation, China invited the United Sates to provide relevant information on found violations to the General Administration of China Customs (GACC).

4.117. The United States explained that the US FDA had put in place Import Alert 99-30 in response to the contamination with melamine of dairy products exported from China, noting that it was not a ban and did not stop trade. Numerous Chinese companies had provided sufficient evidence to the FDA for their products to be processed under normal import procedures. The firm-to-firm approach remained open to individual Chinese companies while the country-wide Import Alert remained in place. The United States remained open to technical engagement with China on the issue.

4.2.15 The Russian Federation's delay in listing of establishments for export of dairy products (ID 586) - Concerns of India

4.118. India welcomed the confirmation that five new Indian dairy establishments had been approved in 2025. This raised the number of Indian dairy establishments listed on the FSVPS website to eleven, three of which were authorized to export dairy products, while the remaining eight faced special requirements. India also sought clarification on the timelines to process the pending approvals for 18 additional dairy establishments, and asked the Russian Federation to consider conducting an audit of India's official control system instead of physical inspections of individual establishments. India had also invited the Russian Federation to consider renewing and expanding the scope of the existing MoU to cover all relevant food categories with a view to making the approval process more efficient, minimize unnecessary procedures, and facilitate smoother trade in dairy products.

4.119. Noting the importance of the ongoing bilateral dialogue, the Russian Federation noted that both competent authorities had agreed in 2022 on a veterinary certificate for exports of heat-treated

dairy products derived from cattle, sheep and goats originating from India to the territory of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The FSVPS had authorized four Indian milk production enterprises in 2023 and five enterprises in 2025, under special conditions, and had inspected 11 milk processing plants in 2025. The Russian Federation was waiting for India's comments on a preliminary report containing information about the decision not to include certain dairy enterprises in the Register and for a response to the proposal of bilateral consultations with the Indian competent authority.

4.2.16 Uncertainty over coffee beans exports to the People's Republic of China (ID 605) - Concerns of Guatemala

4.120. Recalling that exports of coffee beans had been blocked since December 2024, Guatemala deeply regretted China's negative response to engaging through the WTO multilateral channels. Guatemala had submitted its new phytosanitary electronic certificate to China's enquiry point, which had provided no comments. Reiterating its willingness to find technical solutions, Guatemala asked China to either confirm the acceptance of the physical phytosanitary certificate, submitted electronically with a QR code, to be stamped and signed, or to use the IPPC ePhyto certificate. Reiterating the importance of transparent, non-discriminatory, rules-based trade, Guatemala shared its deep concern over China's trade-restrictive measures. Guatemala requested China to hold a technical bilateral meeting and urged China to respects its multilateral commitments towards the restoration of market access.

4.121. Concerned at the lack of progress on the issue, Chinese Taipei urged China to respond to Guatemala in a concrete and constructive manner in accordance with the SPS Agreement, to enhance transparency and communication, and to avoid trade barriers. Chinese Taipei called on all Members to act in line with WTO commitments and to uphold the rules of the multilateral trading system.

4.122. In 2024, China had identified several batches of coffee beans accompanied by phytosanitary certificates that did not comply with the IPPC's ISPM12. In China's view, these non-compliances were a possible indication of deficiencies in Guatemala's official quarantine and supervision system. Underscoring its open and cooperative attitude and readiness for technical bilateral exchanges, China advised Guatemala to review its quarantine and regulatory system for exported goods and to provide review results to China.

4.2.17 China's delay in approving requests for new listing and reinstatement of export establishments (ID 516) - Concerns of Japan and Australia

4.123. Japan expressed concerns over China's Decree 248, citing lack of scientific basis and transparency, unjustified trade barriers, and technical issues in the CIFER system. Japan requested clearer timelines, transparent rejection criteria, prompt completion of pending registrations for aquatic products, and disclosure of renewal procedures. Reaffirming its commitment to constructive engagement, Japan urged China to take concrete and timely actions to address these concerns, to establish a standard processing period for registration procedures and to clearly communicate the information to WTO Members. Japan also raised concerns regarding Decree 280, scheduled to enter into force on 1 June 2026, and urged China to provide Members with essential information in this respect. Finally, Japan strongly requested China to proceed without delay to the procedures with regard to the exportation of Japanese aquatic products by re-registered export-related establishments.

4.124. Australia recalled that SPS controls, inspection and approval procedures should be timely, transparent and not less favourable than those undertaken domestically. Acknowledging the recent productive technical dialogue with China, Australia welcomed the listing of 14 new sheep meat establishments, three dairy establishments, and eight seafood establishments in 2025, and regretted that requests for new listings of beef establishments were still pending, limiting market access for Australian beef products. Australia looked forward to collaborative engagement with China towards resolving this matter.

4.125. The United States remained disappointed over China's delays in listing and relisting of US export establishments, noting unresolved cases despite corrective actions. The United States shared its view that GACC had failed to publish new beef facilities and to relist meat and cold storage, and seafood facilities. Reaffirming its willingness to engage bilaterally, the United States urged China

to list all US beef establishments that had been certified by USDA as eligible for export. The United States submitted its statement in G/SPS/GEN/2401.

4.126. China stated that registration and renewal procedures for export establishments from the concerned Members were proceeding normally. Regarding Japan's concerns, China noted the effective bilateral communications, which had included training sessions and the provision of written responses to Japan's questions. China emphasized that its registration system was based on its Food Safety Law and aligned with international practices, with CIFER providing access to procedures, application status, evaluation processes, and feedback on results. China invited Japan to raise specific issues faced during registration. On Australia's concerns, China reported that the vast majority of the submissions for renewal or new registration from dairy enterprises had been approved, with a few rejections mainly due to incomplete documentation, non-compliance and other reasons, and a small number of applications still under review. On meat enterprises, China was reviewing the technical documents submitted by Australia, following two rounds of consultations held in 2025. On concerns raised by the United States, China highlighted a productive bilateral discussion where it had shared the latest progress regarding registration of US beef and aquatic product enterprises. China looked forward to strengthened technical consultation towards the resolution of the issue.

4.127. Thanking Members for their constructive comments, China clarified that Decree 248 had been reviewed to enhance food safety supervision of imported food while facilitating trade, and that revised Decree 280 would take effect on 1 June 2026. The new rules introduced automatic renewal for compliant enterprises, extended the renewal window to 3-12 months before expiry for high-risk enterprises, and extended time to apply for renewal registration. The revised Decree unified the current two registration methods, introduced a list-based registration method, enabled batch registration based on mutual recognition of food safety systems, and adopted catalogue-based management for dynamic risk adjustments. Registration application documents had been further simplified, and automatic review would be promoted using the latest technologies. China would issue supporting documents to facilitate Members' understanding of the benefits of the registration reform, and was also conducting policy briefings and trainings at different levels. Underscoring that CIFER was the only official portal for applications, alterations, renewal, suspensions or reinstatement of food export, China invited Members to share with GACC questions regarding policy interpretation or specifical technical issues.

4.2.18 India's approval procedures to import plants, animals and their products (ID 565) - Concerns of the European Union

4.128. The European Union reiterated its concerns over prolonged and unjustified delays in India's import approval procedures for plants, animals, and their products. Noting progress in bilateral technical discussions regarding market access applications for plants and plant products, the European Union encouraged India to continue reducing backlogs of pending applications. In contrast, there was no progress to report with regards to animal products, and the European Union regretted the lack of information on the pending market access applications. Looking forward to deepening technical bilateral discussions, the European Union urged India to engage constructively, fulfil its SPS commitments, avoid undue delays and implement its import legislation in a transparent manner.

4.129. India stated that it had been efficiently processing all import applications for plants, animals, and related products submitted by EU member States, and had established multiple Joint and Technical Working Groups to address these issues. In several cases, India had requested additional technical details and had shared the status of applications with the concerned member States. Acknowledging administrative constraints and scientific considerations, India reaffirmed its commitment to constructive bilateral engagement under the WTO SPS framework and to ensuring the appropriate level of protection while facilitating trade through transparent and science-based risk assessment processes.

4.2.19 Indonesia's approval procedures for animal and plant products (ID 441) - Concerns of the European Union and India

4.130. The European Union reiterated its concerns over undue and unpredictable delays in Indonesia's approval procedures for imports of plants, animals, and their products. Noting minimal progress on pending applications and Indonesia's lack of responses or explanations, the European

Union highlighted that some applications remained unresolved since nearly a decade. In the EU view, the lack of transparency of Indonesia's import procedures and absence of clear communication on application deficiencies prevented corrective actions. The European Union urged Indonesia to limit information requirements to what was necessary, simplify approval procedures for EU member States and recognize the EU harmonized SPS measures. Emphasizing that its request was consistent with the SPS Agreement, the European Union called for Indonesia to comply with its SPS obligations, particularly Annex C of the Agreement, and to accelerate backlog processing. The European Union expressed readiness for technical discussions.

4.131. India shared the concern over ongoing delays, limited transparency and unpredictability in Indonesia's approval procedures for establishments producing products of animal origin. Despite sustained bilateral and technical engagements, India noted that physical audits had not yet been conducted for two dairy and two gelatine establishments, delaying market access. India also highlighted that applications for three additional dairy establishments, one egg and egg products establishment and one honey establishment had remained pending since 2023 without clear explanations or timelines. A separate request for inspection of new dairy and gelatine establishments had not received a response either. Referring to Annex C of the SPS Agreement, India urged Indonesia to establish a predictable mechanism for systematic communication and feedback, and called for continuity and consistency in the approval process to enable fair, science-based market access for Indian animal-origin products.

4.132. Indonesia informed the European Union that it had conducted desk reviews for 17 applications for pork and dairy product establishments from nine EU member States, and that two pork and dairy product establishments, from Italy and the Netherlands, had withdrawn from the approval process. Indonesia would continue to review these applications upon completion of additional supporting documents. Indonesia also reported progress on India's applications, including the desk review process for two establishments for egg and dairy products. Indonesia stated that its domestic regulations were consistent with Articles 2 and 5 of the SPS Agreement and were implemented in a transparent manner. To conclude, Indonesia reaffirmed its commitment to constructive engagement with trading partners to ensure transparent and efficient progress.

4.2.20 Panama - Import restrictions on bovine meat products due to limitations on authorizations for Federal Inspection Type establishments (ID 617) - Concerns of Mexico

4.133. Referring to its full intervention in eAgenda, Mexico explained that Panama had not shared the final report of the on-site audit undertaken in 2022 to nine Federal Inspection Type (FIT) establishments. Instead, it had only authorized some establishments to export bovine meat products (only offal), which were unrelated to the results of the audit, and regretted that the subsequent bilateral meetings had not led to a satisfactory conclusion. Acknowledging the renewal of authorizations of the FIT establishments in February 2026, Mexico insisted that the authorized products did not correspond to the original request and that it was still waiting for a response on the scheduling of inspections to move towards authorizations for all the requested products.

4.134. Costa Rica maintained its concerns regarding Panama's regulatory practices which, in its view, lacked scientific justifications and were not based on risk analysis. Noting that these practices often led to complete restrictions to the Panamanian market, and negatively impacted Costa Rican agricultural exports. Costa Rica urged Panama to take into consideration Members' concerns regarding inadequate implementation of SPS measures and failure to comply with the SPS Agreement.

4.135. Acknowledging ongoing bilateral dialogue, Panama clarified that authorizations for establishments and meat products were granted on the basis of technical criteria and risk analysis, in line with the national regulatory framework and the SPS Agreement. Panama had informed Mexico about the extension of the authorization for certain products for nine Federal Inspection Type (FIT) establishments. Reiterating its willingness to continue constructive work, Panama had taken note of Members comments and would convey them to capital and keep the Committee updated on relevant progress.

4.2.21 Korea's requirement of a health certificate with a declaration of aquatic disease status (ID 557) - Concerns of India

4.136. India was of the view that Korea's requirement for consignment-wise testing of WOAH-listed shrimp pathogenic viruses constituted a barrier to trade. India noted that, while the white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) and infectious myonecrosis virus (IMNV) were present in both countries, taura syndrome virus (TSV) and the yellow head virus (YHV) were not reported in India. Underscoring that active national surveillance programmes were in place, India requested Korea to limit health certification requirements strictly to what was necessary to prevent trade disruption and to comply with the SPS Agreement and Articles 5.1, 2.2 and 5.1.3 of the WOAH Aquatic Code. Willing to engage in bilateral consultations, India proposed acceptance of disease-free certification based on national surveillance, rather than mandatory testing of each consignment, based on WOAH guidelines.

4.137. Korea took note of India's concerns regarding import health requirements for aquatic animals and recalled that, since 2008, it has applied non-discriminatory quarantine measures aligned with WOAH standards to prevent the spread of listed aquatic diseases. Korea reiterated that India's objection to consignment-by-consignment pathogen testing could be addressed by demonstrating disease freedom through two consecutive years of targeted surveillance, as provided under Article 1.4.13 of the WOAH Aquatic Animal Health Code. Korea noted that, at a bilateral meeting in April 2024, both sides had agreed that Korea would review India's documentation - namely the list of shrimp farms intended for export, national targeted-surveillance results for four shrimp diseases (WSD, IMN, YHD and TS), and two years of surveillance data - with a view to revising testing requirements. Korea recalled that India committed to supplying this information within two months, but after twenty-two months no submission had been received, making it impossible to consider relaxing current requirements. Korea reaffirmed its commitment to constructive cooperation and urged India to provide the required documentation as soon as possible.

4.2.22 EU increased sampling frequency for inspection of farmed shrimps and newly listed fishery establishments not permitted to export aquaculture products (ID 552) - Concerns of India

4.138. Acknowledging the listing of 103 shrimp farming units in 2025, India reiterated its concerns over the EU increased sampling and testing frequency for farmed shrimp imports, despite a proven reduction in antibiotic residue rejections and corrective actions taken following EU audits. India urged the European Union to reduce the sampling frequency of aquaculture consignments from 50% to 10%, and requested that sampling and testing regulations be aligned with trade facilitation principles to ensure fair and predictable market access.

4.139. The European Union welcomed India's continued interest and reported that its most recent audit in September 2022 found significant progress in India's residue-monitoring programme compared with 2018, particularly in testing scope, implementation and laboratory-method validation. The European Union noted, however, that improvements were still needed regarding follow-up investigations and deterrent measures, and that existing testing regimes therefore remained necessary to ensure the chemical safety of Indian aquaculture exports. It recalled that the audit report and India's action plan were published in March 2023, the recommendations were addressed, and the audit was formally closed at the end of 2024. While non-compliances for nitrofurans and chloramphenicol had decreased since 2020, the European Union highlighted an increase in RASFF notifications in 2025, making it premature to lift reinforced controls. The European Union also informed India that it had begun listing new fisheries establishments for export - 104 since early 2025 - within the context of free trade agreement (FTA) discussions, and expressed confidence that continued SPS cooperation would support further progress.

4.2.23 Saudi Arabia's undue delay in listing of fishery establishments (ID 612) - Concerns of India

4.140. Acknowledging the recent bilateral contacts, India reiterated its concern over Saudi Arabia's suspension of shrimp and lobster imports since March 2023 following detections of WSSV. India was still waiting for detailed test reports and exporter-specific data, which was constraining its ability to take corrective actions. India requested Saudi Arabia to adopt a system-based recognition approach, to discontinue the requirement for third-party certification, and to recognize India's official control

and certification system issued by the Export Inspection Council, which ensured full traceability and compliance with food safety standards for exported fish and fishery products. India invited the Saudi Food and Drug Authority to audit India's official control system and urged timely listing of establishments to facilitate fair, transparent, and science-based trade in seafood.

4.141. Saudi Arabia reaffirmed its commitment to facilitating safe trade in a manner consistent with the SPS Agreement and relevant international standards. Regarding the temporary ban of shrimp imports from India, introduced following detection of the WSS, India' competent authorities had been informed of the requirements to be fulfilled to restore trade, further clarified in a bilateral meeting between the respective competent authorities in March 2026. Saudia Arabia informed the Committee that this matter had also been addressed bilaterally with India in 2025.

4.2.24 Viet Nam's delay in listing of establishments for export of fishery products (ID 613) - Concerns of India

4.142. Acknowledging the removal of duplication in the listing of certain fisheries establishments, India regretted that Viet Nam had not updated the listing of Indian fishery establishments since September 2023. India informed the Committee that the listing of 64 new establishments and modifications of 51 already listed establishments was still pending. India urged Viet Nam to expedite these approvals to facilitate trade and also proposed renewing and expanding the scope of the existing MoU between the respective competent authorities to adopt a systems-based audit approach.

4.143. Viet Nam thanked India for its interest in the Vietnamese market and reported that 461 Indian establishments and more than 2,000 fishery products had been approved for export to Viet Nam. It explained that a large number of new registration dossiers and requests for amendments submitted by Indian enterprises had created administrative delays due to their scale and technical complexity. Viet Nam noted that the dossiers were under active review and that formal written responses on several of them were expected by early April 2026, with priority given to establishments and products that already held approval. Viet Nam reaffirmed the value it placed on its cooperative relationship with India and its commitment to accelerating inspections and the listing process to facilitate bilateral trade.

4.2.25 UK relisting of delisted seafood processing units (ID 616) - Concerns of India

4.144. India explained that the United Kingdom had delisted 14 Indian seafood processing units in 2022, and shared concerns over procedural delays affecting market access. Referring to Annex C of the Agreement and to other international guidelines, India underscored that procedural delays should be avoided to restore market access and to ensure that technical assessments facilitated fair and efficient trade.

4.145. Noting that India had again raised this matter as an STC, the United Kingdom expressed uncertainty as to why, recalling that it had repeatedly sought to advance the relisting process but had been waiting for India to supply the necessary information. The United Kingdom explained that, following its January 2023 audit of India's controls for veterinary-medicine residues in aquaculture products, it had consistently engaged to progress India's request but required clarification on several points after reviewing India's action plan. It stated that the required evidence - requested multiple times and clearly specified - was only submitted by India on 9 February 2026, and that the United Kingdom acknowledged receipt that same day and was reviewing the documentation with a view to resolving the matter promptly.

4.2.26 Panama's undue delays in the renewal of authorizations for plants of fishery and livestock enterprises (ID 509) - Concerns of Peru

4.146. Peru reiterated its concern over undue delays in Panama's renewal of the approvals for Peruvian fish-processing establishments. It noted that although Panama granted a one-year extension in 2025 for thirteen establishments, this expired on 18 February 2026 and no further renewals had been issued despite repeated reminders by Peru's National Authority for Health and Safety in Fisheries and Aquaculture (SANIPES) and Peru's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR). Peru indicated that the lapse in approvals had restricted market access for previously compliant exporters and that, although Panama informed Peru in a bilateral meeting on

4 March 2026 that the technical document review was complete, no date had been set for the meeting of the Panamanian Food Agency's Board required to finalize the renewal. Peru expressed concern over the lack of clarity regarding the legal and technical basis for renewal periods and stressed that the absence of defined timelines and procedures undermined transparency. Recalling Article 8 and Annex C(1) (c) of the SPS Agreement, Peru requested Panama to renew the approvals promptly and to provide the regulatory framework establishing procedures and timelines, and expressed readiness to convene the bilateral SPS committee established under their bilateral trade agreement.

4.147. Canada supported the concerns expressed by Peru, and noted that Panama's competent authorities continued to apply expiry dates to Canadian inspected meat and fish products establishments. Canada acknowledged the extension granted by Panama until June 2026 for all approved Canadian meat establishments, yet noting that the recurring nature of the situation where authorizations would expire was creating uncertainties for Canadian exporters. Canada further stressed that it was still waiting for responses by Panama on proposed audit dates related to the approval of Canadian beef, pork and poultry meat establishments.

4.148. Costa Rica reiterated that it shared this concern and expressed continued alarm over Panama's use of SPS-related practices that, in its view, lacked scientific justification and risk assessment, and which often resulted in *de facto* market closures affecting a wide range of agricultural exports. Costa Rica urged the Panamanian authorities to address the concerns raised by Costa Rica and other Members regarding the inappropriate application of SPS measures and the apparent non-observance of obligations under the SPS Agreement.

4.149. Panama thanked Peru for raising the concern and highlighted the constructive technical dialogue maintained between the two authorities. Panama reiterated that it was actively reviewing renewal requests for Peruvian fishery and livestock establishments in line with its regulatory procedures and SPS obligations. It noted recent progress, including one-year extensions granted to thirteen establishments and valid authorisations for two others until 2027, and confirmed that technical requirements for new applications had been communicated to Peru, with further information still pending. Panama also indicated that some establishments were removed from the system due to inactivity over the previous five years, consistent with applicable administrative rules. It reaffirmed its readiness to continue bilateral engagement, took note of other Members' interventions and committed to keeping the Committee informed of further developments.

4.2.27 Russian Federation - Procedures for authorizing units eligible for export of fish and fish products to Eurasian Customs Union (ID 508) - Concerns of India

4.150. India expressed appreciation for the clarification that new exporters of fish and fishery products could only be added to the EAEU Register of Exporters following either on-site inspections or an audit of the exporting country's official control system. India explained that the Russian Federation was currently inspecting nine fishery establishments, eight aquaculture farms and one aquaculture shrimp supplier, and called for the urgent address of the issue, and for a clear, time-bound plan for completing the listing process to ensure fair and predictable access to the EAEU market for Indian fishery products. Furthermore, India urged Russia to adopt a systems-based audit approach rather than individual establishment inspections, as this would streamline approvals, reduce unnecessary procedures, and facilitate smoother trade between the two countries.

4.151. The Russian Federation reiterated that the procedure for adding new establishments to the Eurasian Economic Union's Register was governed by the EAEU Decision No. 94, under which authorization was based on guarantees from the exporting country's competent authority and the results of inspections or system audits. It recalled that India had repeatedly been informed that continued detections of prohibited and harmful substances in Indian products required establishment-level inspections before further access could be granted. The Russian Federation noted that an inspection carried out in 2025 resulted in nine Indian establishments being approved and that, between September 2025 and February 2026, it expanded authorized activities for twenty-one establishments, added thirty-eight new producers to the Register and lifted temporary restrictions on one facility. In light of this progress, the Russian Federation requested that India refrain from raising this concern at future Committee meetings.

4.2.28 EU delays in the renewal of authorizations for fishery enterprises and fish products (ID 579) - Concerns of the Russian Federation

4.152. The Russian Federation reiterated its concern over the EU decision to stop processing technical updates for Russian fish establishments in the TRACES-NT system, noting that the lack of engagement since 2022 on updating information for previously listed and authorised enterprises had effectively blocked Russian fish exports to the EU market. It considered the EU delays in renewing authorisations for fishery establishments and products to constitute an unjustified and discriminatory restriction on trade. The Russian Federation urged the European Union to comply with its WTO obligations by ensuring that SPS measures be based on risk assessments related to human, animal and plant health and not hinder trade through technical barriers inconsistent with Article 5 of the SPS Agreement. Finally, the Russian Federation added that the lack of substantive answer demonstrated a low level of transparency, and called upon the European Union to comply with its WTO obligations.

4.2.29 Mexico's undue delays in the clearance of frozen shrimp (ID 577) - Concerns of Ecuador

4.153. Ecuador reiterated its concern over Mexico's prolonged failure to publish the sanitary requirements needed to reopen access for Ecuadorian frozen raw shrimp and fish, noting that the issue had been raised at six consecutive Committee meetings without resolution. Ecuador recalled that Mexico suspended shrimp imports in 2015 citing exotic diseases, despite Ecuador's documented evidence - including conclusions from Mexico's 2018 audit - confirming the absence of yellow head virus (YHV) and infectious myonecrosis virus (IMNV). It explained that Ecuador had repeatedly provided all requested technical information, most recently in 2023 and 2024, and had agreed to Mexico's proposed requirement sheet in 2020, yet Mexico had not finalized or published the applicable conditions. Ecuador stressed that these delays had unjustifiably restricted trade despite Ecuador's compliance with all applicable sanitary obligations. It urged Mexico to fulfil its commitments under Articles 2.3, 5.6 and 8 and Annex C of the SPS Agreement by promptly publishing the sanitary requirements in the system of the Mexican Service for the National Health for Food Safety and Food Quality (SENASICA) to enable the resumption of shrimp exports, and by responding to pending queries regarding other fishery products. Ecuador reaffirmed its commitment to food safety and technical cooperation and called on Mexico to ensure transparent, science-based procedures, thus avoiding disproportionate impacts on trade.

4.154. Referring to its full intervention in eAgenda, Mexico took note of the comments provided by Ecuador, indicating that these would be conveyed to the relevant competent authority in Mexico for consideration.

4.2.30 Mexico's undue delay in reauthorizing shrimp imports (ID 614) - Concerns of Peru

4.155. Peru reiterated its concern over Mexico's prolonged delays in completing the analysis required to reopen imports of Peruvian shrimp, noting that shipments had been suspended since June 2024 despite Peru's prior full compliance with Mexican sanitary requirements and sustained technical engagement. Peru stressed that nearly two years had passed without progress, even though all requested technical information had been submitted to enable the epidemiological assessment promised by Mexican authorities. It underlined that the delays had caused significant economic losses for Peruvian exporters and negatively affected the aquaculture value chain, and expressed concern that such a situation did not reflect the level of commitment and cooperation expected between close regional partners with existing bilateral and multilateral obligations. Recalling Article 8 and Annex C(1)(a) and (c) of the SPS Agreement, Peru emphasized that control and approval procedures had to be completed without undue delay and without unnecessary information requirements. Peru reaffirmed its willingness to continue technical dialogue and proposed convening, as soon as possible, the bilateral SPS Committee established under Article 7.10 of the Peru–Mexico trade agreement to resolve the matter promptly.

4.156. Referring to its full intervention in eAgenda, and noting Peru's intervention on this matter, Mexico explained that SENASICA had requested additional information from Peru's SANIPES regarding the system and registration of white-shrimp producers and processing establishments. Mexico added that, while awaiting this documentation, it had proposed holding a videoconference prior to the Committee meeting and regretted that SENASICA had been unable to participate despite

Peru's availability. Mexico reiterated its willingness to continue technical cooperation with Peru to advance the process.

4.2.31 Thailand's ban on imports of aquaculture shrimp from India (ID 607) - Concerns of India

4.157. Referring to its intervention in June 2025, India reiterated its concerns regarding Thailand's requirement to test shrimp imports for seven WOAH-listed pathogens. India argued that this requirement exceeded what was scientifically justified, noting that four of the listed pathogens had never been reported in India and calling into question the necessity and proportionality of the testing protocol. India stated that the current measures were more trade-restrictive than necessary and lacked scientific transparency, raising concerns under Article 2 of the SPS Agreement and Section 5.1.2.2 of the WOAH Aquatic Code. India emphasized that highly processed and cooked shrimp products posed no disease risk and were recognized as safe by WOAH. India had submitted an official request to initiate the evaluation process and expressed its willingness to engage bilaterally towards a mutually agreeable resolution.

4.158. Malaysia supported India's concern and reiterated its own regarding Thailand's suspension, since December 2017, of live, chilled and frozen shrimp imports from Malaysia. Malaysia noted that the measure was imposed without prior engagement and based on allegations of IMNV raised by a private industry association, and that the suspension discriminated against Malaysian shrimp. It considered the measure more trade-restrictive than necessary and lacking scientific transparency, inconsistent with Article 2 of the SPS Agreement and relevant WOAH provisions. Malaysia regretted the absence of progress despite repeated bilateral efforts and expressed its readiness to continue engaging with Thailand to reach a mutually acceptable solution.

4.159. Noting the concerns raised by India and Malaysia, Thailand clarified that, under regulations in place since 2010, imports of marine shrimp from all countries had to be accompanied by a health certificate confirming freedom from seven WOAH-listed diseases, based on Thailand's risk assessment and relevant WOAH recommendations. Thailand recalled that temporary restrictions on susceptible shrimp species from India were introduced following the detection of IMNV in India, and that imports of white-leg shrimp were resumed in 2022 after India submitted a specific market-access request; imports of other species required separate submissions. Thailand noted that two listed diseases were present in Thailand but were subject to national control measures, requiring equivalent controls for imports, and that India had not yet provided the requested scientific evidence regarding the absence of the remaining four diseases. Thailand reiterated its readiness to engage in technical consultations, noting that it had invited India to schedule discussions but had not yet received a proposal. In response to Malaysia, Thailand took note of the comments raised and said it would transmit them to the competent authorities.

4.2.32 Indonesia's pathogen-free certificate and testing requirement for frozen shrimp (ID 615) - Concerns of India

4.160. Acknowledging the technical explanations received on notification G/SPS/N/IDN/156, India requested Indonesia to share specific risk assessments, surveillance data, or scientific references justifying the inclusion of each of the listed diseases in the proposed veterinary health certification requirements. Reaffirming its commitment to continued engagement with Indonesia, India, (1) proposed to explore a mutual recognition mechanism for veterinary certification, consistent with Article 4 of the SPS Agreement; (2) suggested undertaking a joint technical review of the proposed certificate templates to ensure alignment with WOAH standards and to minimize administrative burdens, redundant testing requirements, and related costs for exporters; and (3) requested exemption from certification requirements for diseases that have never been reported in India.

4.161. Indonesia explained that internal consultations were still going on and would refer to this question once further updates were received from capital.

4.2.33 Delays in Thailand's approval procedures for animal products (ID 527) - Concerns of the Russian Federation

4.162. The Russian Federation reiterated its concern regarding the delays in finalizing approval procedures for exports of Russian livestock products to Thailand. The Russian Federation had been

working with Thailand toward market access for pork, beef, poultry, and finished meat products. Still, and despite the submission of the required information, Thailand had not granted market access to any Russian enterprises for these products, and the response to an invitation for an inspection and the approval of draft feed certificates remained pending. The Russian Federation recalled its recognized WOAH status as free from FMD (with and without vaccination), controlled risk for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), and freedom from peste des petits ruminants (PPR) and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP). Confirming its readiness for comprehensive bilateral cooperation, the Russian Federation urged Thailand to comply with its WTO obligations under Article 8 and Annex C of the SPS Agreement to avoid undue delays.

4.163. Acknowledging the recognition by WOAH of Russia's disease-free statuses, Thailand noted that the import requirements for beef products were under review and that progress would be communicated in due course. Regarding market access requests for pork and poultry meat, Thailand reiterated that access requests would be considered once WOAH recognized disease-free status. On feed and feed additives, Thailand was waiting for the formal submission of the revised draft health certificates and additional information requested following a technical meeting in November 2025. Thailand remained open to continued bilateral discussions.

4.2.34 Chinese Taipei's import restrictions on poultry and beef (ID 521) - Concerns of Brazil

4.164. Reiterating its concern on the lack of progress regarding poultry and beef exports, Brazil expressed the view that Chinese Taipei's approval procedures violated Articles 5 and 8, and Annex C of the SPS Agreement and disregarded international standards and WOAH guidelines. For bovine meat, Brazil confirmed that all requested questionnaires and supplementary documentation had been submitted and acknowledged by Chinese Taipei, and urged for a reasonable and predictable timeline for the next steps, including a potential on-site audit. Regarding poultry, Brazil highlighted that the country had been recognized as free from HPAI since June 2025, and noted that additional information, including on heat-treated products, continued to be requested while the documentation submitted was still under review. Reiterating its commitment to constructive dialogue, Brazil sought clarification on the expected timeframe for the completion of the analysis of the documentation already submitted and on the subsequent steps required to conclude the approval procedures for poultry and beef.

4.165. Concerning market access applications for poultry meat, Chinese Taipei had request Brazil to submit additional information regarding the HPAI and ND free zone application, following recognition by WOAH as country free from those diseases in 2025. Following the subsequent outbreaks of HPAI, Chinese Taipei had asked Brazil to provide the dossier to apply for the HPAI-free recognition after clearance and disinfection of the epidemic, as well as additional supplementary information. On heat-treated poultry meat, supplemental food safety documentation had been received in 2024, and Chinese Taipei was waiting for an answer to their request for additional supplemental information. The review process of animal health questionnaires had been suspended following Brazil's notifications of HPAI outbreaks, and the process would resume until Chinese Taipei recognized Brazil as HPAI-free. Turning to market access applications for beef, Chinese Taipei stated that, under its regulations, Brazil was classified as a negligible-risk country with reported cases of BSE. Therefore, it was required to submit the questionnaires on food safety, BSE control and animal health. While the supplementary information received for some of the questionnaires was under review, Chinese Taipei was still waiting for Brazil's response to other requests. The outcomes of the review would be conveyed to Brazil as soon as possible. Following the completion of the review, an on-site audit would be arranged jointly by both parties. Reaffirming that its measures were transparent, science-based, implemented without undue delay, and compliant with the SPS Agreement, Chinese Taipei expressed willingness to continue discussions with Brazil.

4.2.35 The Dominican Republic's undue delays in the authorization process for exports of animal products from Costa Rica (ID 581) - Concerns of Costa Rica

4.166. Costa Rica reiterated its concern regarding the prolonged delays experienced in the approval process for the exportation of products of animal origin to the Dominican Republic, despite previous assurances that delays were administrative. Highlighting the legal uncertainty and market access barriers for 22 establishments intending to export beef, pork, poultry, sausages, dairy products and liquid egg, Costa Rica urged the Dominican Republic to finalize the sanitary approval process for exports of animal products without further undue delay.

4.167. Highlighting the challenges faced related to animal health and biosecurity, the Dominican Republic referred to the efforts in place to strengthen its domestic sanitary infrastructure and institutional capacity. Committed to maintaining dialogue and cooperation to ensure safe and sustainable trade practices, the Dominican Republic would convey the message to relevant competent authorities in capital for a prompt resolution of the concern. The Dominican Republic submitted its statement in G/SPS/GEN/2396.

4.2.36 General import restrictions due to BSE (ID 193) - Concerns of the European Union

4.168. Reiterating this concern for the 55th time, the European Union reported that some Members continued to maintain import bans and had accumulated unacceptable delays in their approval procedures to lift BSE restrictions. In the European Union's view, the delays by some Members, including China, Indonesia, South Africa and Chinese Taipei, were at odds with Article 8 of the SPS Agreement and Annex C thereto. The European Union urged Members to comply with their obligations under the SPS Agreement and apply international standards, lift the remaining BSE-related restrictions for all EU member States, finalize the risk assessment of pending market access requests, and complete administrative steps to lift BSE bans without further delay to allow market access without further delay. The European Union reiterated its openness to working constructively with Members.

4.169. In response, Chinese Taipei indicated that its competent authorities outlined the scope for systematic audits of certain imported products, including beef. Chinese Taipei further explained that prior to importation, the process involved a systematic audit, review of food safety questionnaires, risk assessment, on-site inspection, and risk communication; the review period depended on the completeness of information and supporting documents submitted. Finally, Chinese Taipei confirmed that beef imports from the Netherlands and Sweden had been approved under this process and expressed readiness to cooperate and communicate with EU member States.

4.170. In recent years, China had lifted BSE-related bans on boneless beef from cattle under 30 months of age for several EU member states following rigorous risk assessments. China expressed its willingness to continue strengthening technical exchanges and sharing prevention and control experiences with EU member States regarding BSE mitigation measures and strategies.

4.2.37 EU recognition of Mexico as a country with WOAH negligible BSE risk (ID 543) - Concerns of Mexico

4.171. Referring to its full intervention in eAgenda, Mexico explained that since 2017 it had repeatedly requested the European Union to recognize its status as country of negligible BSE risk and its inclusion in the corresponding list in the annex of Commission Decision 2007/453/EC. Mexico specifically referred to exports of heart devices of bovine origin from a company whose authorization had expired. Regretting the lack of scientific and technical justification for this lack of recognition, Mexico would present a formal request in line with Regulation (EC) No 999/2001.

4.172. The European Union had taken note of Mexico's official BSE status according to WOAH and was considering Mexico's request. The European Union indicated that it had responded to Mexico's communications and the issue was under bilateral discussion within the framework of the EU-Mexico SPS committee. The European Union reiterated that Mexico would have to submit technical information based on the procedure laid down in Article 5 of Regulation (EC) No 999/2001. The European Union looked forward to continuing the technical discussions with Mexico.

4.2.38 Türkiye's prohibition on the importation of live cattle (ID 604) - Concerns of the United States

4.173. Concerned that Türkiye's prohibition on the importation of live cattle did not align with WOAH standards, the United States indicated it had been awaiting Türkiye's scientific justification for halting live cattle imports since May 2024. Noting that the measures had not been notified to the WTO, the United States regretted that Türkiye had not responded to the efforts made by the US Department of Agriculture to help remove the restriction. Reiterating its openness to collaborating with Türkiye to reopen the market, the United States requested Türkiye to provide a detailed scientific risk assessment and information on the frequency and content of the Ministry of Agriculture's review of the situation. The United States submitted its statement in G/SPS/GEN/2403.

4.174. Türkiye indicated that the United States had reported HPAI cases in live cattle and mammals. Following a statement issued by WOAH, Türkiye had temporarily suspended the importation of cattle to monitor the latest scientific developments and epidemiological data on the spread of HPAI in mammals. Türkiye would welcome the resumption of trade activities once the risk associated with the diseases in cattle was under control.

4.2.39 Canada's restrictions on Brazilian pork from internationally recognized FMD free zones without vaccination (ID 568) - Concerns of Brazil

4.175. Brazil reiterated its concern over Canada's import restrictions on pork and beef. With respect to pork, Brazil shared the view that the delay in initiating the procedures for the recognition of zones free from swine diseases was at odds with the SPS Agreement. Referring to its status for several swine diseases, Brazil considered there were no technical grounds for Canada's delay in the initiation of the evaluation and stressed the need for formalization and predictability. On beef, Brazil noted that Canada had acknowledged the new sanitary condition as free from FMD without vaccination, but it had also indicated the need for an independent evaluation before revising import conditions. Brazil viewed the lack of timeline as an unjustified delay lacking transparency, in disagreement with the SPS Agreement. Noting Canada's indication that work would proceed according to defined priorities and committed to constructive engagement, Brazil requested Canada to provide updates on the progress and greater predictability regarding the conclusion of each stage.

4.176. Canada explained that its Health of Animals Act and Regulations mandated a comprehensive animal disease status evaluation of Brazil to grant enhanced access to Brazilian pork and beef. This would involve scientific risk assessment and on-site evaluation, which required a significant amount of resources. Canadian and Brazilian officials had met in October 2025 and agreed on a clear path forward to address Brazil's various market access requests. Reiterating its commitment to its WTO SPS obligations, Canada encouraged Brazil to withdraw their STC and continue to engage through the established bilateral process.

4.2.40 Japan - Restrictions related to FMD (ID 332) - Concerns of Argentina

4.177. Noting positive developments since the previous Committee meeting, Argentina urged Japan to prioritize these negotiations and to provide an indicative timeline to conclude these procedures promptly towards an effective reopening of the market for beef.

4.178. Japan noted that its market was opened to beef from Argentina's Patagonian region in 2018, following an earlier request in 2017 to allow imports of boneless fresh beef from other regions. Japan explained that it applied its standard approval procedure, in place since 2008, to ensure scientific integrity in evaluating such requests. As Japan was FMD-free without vaccination, imports from regions maintaining FMD-free status through vaccination required detailed technical discussions between both countries' competent authorities. Consultations on the animal health requirements were ongoing, following the completion of the risk assessment for beef imports from regions outside Patagonia in February 2026. Japan reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the process through mutual bilateral collaboration.

4.2.41 South Africa's import restrictions on poultry due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (ID 431) - Concerns of the European Union

4.179. The European Union reiterated its concerns regarding country-wide import bans imposed by South Africa on EU member States after HPAI outbreaks which, in the EU opinion, were against the EU regionalization system, lacked scientific justification and disregarded WOAH's Terrestrial Code. Import bans persisted even though the European Union had provided extensive information on its veterinary services, policy, and regionalization systems, and despite South Africa's intention to review the procedure for resuming trade after regaining HPAI-free status and its commitments at the EU-South Africa summit in March 2025 to facilitate imports of poultry from disease-free areas in the European Union. South Africa had submitted the document "South African National Strategy on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Regionalization" which, in the EU opinion, was not compliant with WOAH standards and South Africa's SPS obligations and further delayed the acceptance of WOAH-self declaration from EU member States. Open to bilateral discussion, the European Union urged South Africa to comply with its commitments and recognize the EU regionalization system, as South Africa had done with other trading partners.

4.180. South Africa reaffirmed its adherence to WOAH guidelines and approved options for the safe trade of animals and animal products, including zoning, compartmentalization, and safe commodities. After sharing its HPAI strategy document with the European Union in June 2025, South Africa had received Belgium's application for regionalization, which was under review. South Africa recalled that it undertook trade with EU member States individually, rather than with the European Union as a bloc. To conclude, South Africa further noted that in February 2026 both Members had agreed to hold a technical meeting regarding regionalization.

4.2.42 China's import restrictions due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (ID 406) - Concerns of the European Union and the United States

4.181. The European Union expressed concerns that China continued to maintain country-wide bans on poultry products from several EU member States due to HPAI outbreaks, irrespective of existing bilateral agreements, despite the implementation of disease management measures in accordance with the regionalization principle and WOAH rules. Looking forward to concrete progress, the European Union requested China to respect its obligations in accordance with the WTO SPS Agreement and the relevant WOAH standards towards further exports of EU poultry to China.

4.182. The United States remained concerned that China had not lifted restrictions on poultry exports from US States declared HPAI-free in accordance with WOAH guidance. Reaffirming its commitment to working bilaterally with China, the United States requested China to lift restrictions on imports from these US States. The United States submitted its statement in G/SPS/GEN/2398.

4.183. China had imposed country bans on imports of poultry and poultry products from EU member States that had experienced HPAI outbreaks, based on considerations of safety and scientific risk assessment. China had lifted the import bans from Finland and France and would maintain communication to facilitate exchanges on epidemic information on avian influenza and on prevention and control technologies. Regarding the US concerns, China explained it had fully implemented the bilateral protocol on cooperation on notification and control procedures. Clarifying that it only suspended poultry meat trade from States where the epidemic occurred, China indicated it would continue to monitor the HPAI situation in the United States.

4.2.43 Japan's approval procedures for poultry products (ID 556) - Concerns of the Russian Federation

4.184. The Russian Federation reiterated its concern over prolonged delays in Japan's approval procedures for granting market access to Russian poultry products. It recalled that a Japanese inspection conducted in 2019 had recognized the regionalization of HPAI in the Bryansk and Tula regions, after which Japan proposed draft veterinary certificates and requirements that were revised multiple times between 2020 and 2021, significantly slowing progress. The Russian Federation noted that repeated invitations for virtual inspections and technical consultations since 2020 had gone unanswered and that no substantive communication had been received despite raising the issue at Committee meetings since 2022. It emphasized that Japan's recognition of the regional animal-health status contrasted with the continued lack of final approval and urged Japan to expedite the certification process to avoid undue delays. The Russian Federation reaffirmed its readiness to engage in comprehensive bilateral cooperation to resolve the matter. Finally, the Russian Federation added that the lack of substantive answer demonstrated a low level of transparency, and called upon Japan to comply with its WTO obligations.

4.2.44 China's import restrictions due to African swine fever (ID 392) - Concerns of the European Union

4.185. The European Union reiterated its longstanding concern over China's continued country-wide bans on pork products from various EU member States following outbreaks of African swine fever (ASF), despite the EU application of WOAH-consistent regionalization and disease-management measures. The European Union noted that, although a few bilateral arrangements existed, a number of EU member States continued to face unjustified restrictions because China did not recognize ASF regionalization at the EU level. The European Union urged China to respect its obligations under the SPS Agreement and relevant WOAH standards by allowing trade from disease-free areas.

4.186. Noting the discussion on ASF–related restrictions, China stated that it welcomed safe, high-quality pork products from EU member States and recalled that trade had proceeded smoothly prior to ASF outbreaks with countries such as Germany and Italy. China explained that, upon receiving requests from concerned EU member States, it conducted timely risk assessments and, following evaluation, had lifted the ASF-related ban on Belgium. China expressed willingness to strengthen exchanges with EU authorities on ASF prevention and control, share relevant information promptly and work jointly to tackle the challenges posed by ASF.

4.2.45 Peru's non-application of regionalization for African swine fever (ID 544) - Concerns of the European Union

4.187. The European Union reiterated its serious concern over Peru's continued countrywide import bans on pork and pork products from EU member States, including those that had regained ASF-free status. The European Union noted that it had repeatedly urged Peru, through diplomatic and bilateral engagement, to recognize ASF regionalization in line with Article 15.1.23 of the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code, yet Peru had taken no steps to implement this internationally accepted framework. The European Union emphasized that its disease-free areas were established in accordance with WOAH standards and that export certificates were issued only for products originating from those zones, ensuring safety and quality. It again requested Peru to comply with its obligations under the SPS Agreement, WOAH standards and the bilateral trade agreement with the European Union, and to allow trade from disease-free areas accordingly.

4.188. Peru reaffirmed its respect for the SPS Agreement and for the provisions of the bilateral trade agreement between the two parties. Peru recalled that, during the most recent bilateral SPS subcommittee meeting on 1–2 December 2025, both sides had held detailed discussions on the issues underlying this concern, including regionalization under Article 6 of the SPS Agreement, the handling of safe products in line with international standards, ASF, and the establishment of a mutually agreed procedure for recognizing disease-free zones. Peru informed the Committee that a further bilateral technical meeting with the European Union would take place on 17 March 2026 to continue addressing the matter and reiterated its full willingness to maintain dialogue and exchange information.

4.2.46 Mexico's import restrictions due to African swine fever (ID 563) - Concerns of the European Union

4.189. The European Union reiterated its concern that Mexico continued to apply countrywide bans on pork from several EU member States affected by ASF, including those that had regained disease-free status, rather than recognizing ASF regionalization in line with WOAH standards, the SPS Agreement and the 2017 bilateral health certificate. The European Union noted that it had repeatedly urged Mexico - most recently at a bilateral meeting on 2-3 March 2026 - to revise its legislation prohibiting imports from ASF-affected countries and to ensure that measures were scientifically justified, proportionate and not used as disguised trade restrictions. It emphasized that EU disease-free zones were established under a harmonized EU-wide system and that regionalization had therefore to apply uniformly across all EU member States. The European Union also asked Mexico to allow safe pork commodities such as collagen and gelatine treated in accordance with Article 15.1.23 of the WOAH Terrestrial Code. The European Union reaffirmed its readiness to engage in bilateral technical discussions to demonstrate the effectiveness of its ASF control system and to resolve this issue in the context of the modernized EU–Mexico agreement.

4.190. Mexico took note of the European Union's comments and recalled that it had repeatedly explained to the European Union that, consistent with WOAH principles, its measures already reflected a form of regionalization insofar as restrictions applied only to pork originating from ASF-affected countries, rather than to the entire European Union. Mexico noted that domestic regulations in force prohibited imports of porcine products from countries affected by ASF and that SENASICA could not override this legal framework, though it had indicated its willingness to initiate an internal review with a view to updating the regulation to incorporate explicit provisions on regionalization. Mexico emphasized SENASICA's continued interest in maintaining close technical cooperation with the European Commission to advance outstanding issues and reaffirmed its readiness to continue bilateral dialogue. Mexico further referred to its full statement uploaded on eAgenda.

4.2.47 Colombia's import restrictions due to African swine fever (ID 580) - Concerns of the European Union

4.191. Noting the continued lack of progress on this matter, the European Union reiterated its concern that Colombia maintained countrywide bans on pork and pork products from certain EU member States affected by ASF, despite repeated requests - including at the December 2025 bilateral SPS subcommittee under the relevant FTA - to apply ASF regionalization. The European Union stressed that its disease-free zones were fully aligned with WOAH standards and that export certificates were issued only for products originating from such zones. It underscored that national restrictions ignoring regionalization lacked a legitimate basis and were inconsistent with SPS and WOAH obligations. The European Union again urged Colombia to allow trade from disease-free areas in accordance with the regionalization principle.

4.192. Colombia reiterated that ASF remained an exotic disease in the Andean region, requiring strict sanitary measures grounded in Andean Decision 879 and Resolution 060469 of the *Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario* (ICA) to prevent its introduction. Colombia noted the European Union's update on ASF developments but highlighted that, despite relatively low numbers of outbreaks in domestic pigs between late December 2025 and January 2026, virus circulation in wild boar remained significant, with hundreds of cases reported in several EU member States. In light of these ongoing risks, Colombia maintained that a cautious, preventive approach was necessary to preserve its zoosanitary status. Colombia reaffirmed its willingness to continue technical dialogue and bilateral cooperation with the European Union and relevant international organizations in line with the SPS Agreement and applicable WOAH standards.

4.2.48 Ecuador - Non-application of regionalization for African swine fever (ID 609) - Concerns of the European Union

4.193. The European Union reiterated its concern that Ecuador continues to apply countrywide bans on pork and pork products from certain EU member States affected by ASF, without recognising ASF regionalization in line with WOAH standards. The European Union noted that, despite repeated requests - including during bilateral SPS subcommittee meetings in Quito in December 2025 - no progress had been made in aligning Ecuador's measures with internationally accepted regionalization principles. It emphasized that EU disease-free zones were established under a transparent, WOAH-aligned system and that export certificates were issued only for products originating from these zones, providing a scientifically sound basis for safe trade. The European Union stressed that maintaining indiscriminate bans undermined confidence in bilateral trade relations and that domestic legislation inconsistent with international standards could not justify non-compliance. It again urged Ecuador to apply the regionalization principle and allow trade from disease-free areas of EU member States.

4.194. Ecuador took note of the European Union's intervention and reiterated that ASF remained an exotic disease for the country, requiring a precautionary approach to protect animal health, domestic pork production and food security. Ecuador stressed that recurrent ASF outbreaks in several EU member States justified maintaining strict vigilance and hygiene measures consistent with Articles 2 and 5 of the SPS Agreement and with the WOAH standards on zoning and recognition of disease-free areas. It further recalled that, under Andean Community Decision 880, any change in the recognition of a third country's sanitary status had to undergo an Andean Community-level risk analysis. Ecuador invited the European Union to submit its regionalization request through the procedures established in Ecuador's applicable regulations so that the corresponding technical assessment could begin, and reaffirmed its commitment to safe, science-based trade and the prevention of exotic animal diseases.

4.2.49 China's import restrictions on animal products in relation to bluetongue disease (ID 593) - Concerns of the European Union

4.195. Noting the continued lack of progress on this matter, the European Union reiterated its strong concern over China's import restrictions on animal products from several EU member States in relation to bluetongue disease. The European Union recalled that, under Article 8.3.2 of the WOAH Terrestrial Code, certain commodities were recognized as safe and should not be subject to import restrictions regardless of the exporting country's bluetongue status. It stressed that China was the only trading partner applying such measures to EU products, and that these restrictions contradicted

internationally agreed standards. The European Union again urged China to lift the bans as soon as possible.

4.196. China noted the European Union's concern and explained that its bans on ruminants and related products from certain EU member States were introduced following bluetongue outbreaks and were based on scientific and safety considerations. China emphasized that recent cases in EU countries, including January 2026 outbreaks in Greece and Poland, showed that the conditions for lifting the bans had not yet been met under the relevant provisions of the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code. China indicated its openness to continued technical exchanges with the European Union, including on prevention and control measures for bluetongue disease.

4.2.50 The Philippines' trade restrictions on imports of meat (ID 466) - Concerns of the European Union

4.197. The European Union reiterated its concerns that the Philippines continued to maintain countrywide bans on pork meat and pork products from EU member States affected by ASF, including those that were disease-free. The EU noted that these longstanding bans were inconsistent with the SPS Agreement and welcomed the recent agreement with the Philippines on applying regionalization for HPAI, under which the European Union had provided all required guarantees to ensure trade only from disease-free areas. The European Union expressed hope for similar progress regarding ASF and looked forward to receiving a response from the Philippines so that trade from ASF- and HPAI-free zones in the European Union could resume without undue delay.

4.198. Noting the concerns raised, the Philippines reaffirmed its commitment to constructive engagement on the bilateral recognition of regionalization for HPAI and ASF, highlighting that Administrative Circulars 9 and 12 (2025) aligned its procedures with WOAH standards. It reported that HPAI regionalization had already been granted to four EU member States and that additional applications were under technical evaluation; for ASF, one EU member State had been recognized and two others had completed providing relevant documentation for review. The Philippines stressed the need for rigorous assessment given the significant impact of ASF and HPAI on domestic livestock sectors and reiterated its commitment to transparency, science-based decision-making and continued cooperation with the European Union, including under the ongoing SPS chapter negotiations of the EU–Philippines FTA.

4.2.51 Delays in Korea's approval procedures for animal products (ID 598) - Concerns of the Russian Federation

4.199. The Russian Federation reiterated its concern over continued delays in Korea's approval procedures for Russian beef exports. It recalled that Korea had indicated that the process would move forward only once the Russian Federation had regained WOAH recognition as free from FMD without vaccination, and noted that the Russian Federation was by then officially recognized as free from FMD both with and without vaccination under zoning, while also maintaining its controlled-risk status for BSE. The Russian Federation stressed that, since 2019, it had repeatedly provided Korea with full technical information on FMD-free regions intended for export, including Bryansk, St. Petersburg and Moscow oblasts, yet no response had been received and market access remained blocked. It urged Korea to comply with its obligations under Articles 6 and 8 of the SPS Agreement to ensure that approval procedures were carried out and completed without undue delay, and reaffirmed its readiness for comprehensive bilateral cooperation to resolve the matter.

4.200. Noting the Russian Federation's continued interest in exporting beef to its market, Korea explained that import-approval procedures were processed in the order received and that the documentation relating to beef from three Russian regions was under review on this basis. Korea recalled that it had proposed a virtual technical meeting on 30 June 2025 for July 2025, but had not yet received a response from the Russian side, and therefore requested that the Russian Federation confirm its availability so that the meeting could be scheduled. Korea reiterated its commitment to maintaining close communication with the Russian Federation as the approval process progressed.

4.2.52 South Africa's delays in granting SPS access for poultry, beef, pork, fish and seafood (ID 564) - Concerns of the Russian Federation

4.201. The Russian Federation concern over the lack of progress in securing access for Russian poultry, beef and pork to the South African market, noting that South Africa had yet to complete its review of the risk-assessment questionnaires submitted for these commodities and had not provided feedback on the BSE questionnaire delivered in 2018. The Russian Federation highlighted that, in May 2025, WOAH had recognized its territory as free from FMD with and without vaccination under the zoning principle and reaffirmed its maintained statuses as controlled-risk for BSE and free from PPR and CBPP. It welcomed South Africa's approval of the veterinary certificate for food fish and seafood products and reported that seven Russian establishments had been added to the EAEU Register in September 2025. The Russian Federation reiterated its readiness to continue comprehensive bilateral cooperation.

4.202. South Africa confirmed receipt of the outstanding information provided by the Russian Federation. South Africa noted that it had remained in contact with the Russian Federation, recalling that the most recent discussion had taken place in June 2025 to review the approval process. It acknowledged the progress made regarding fish and fishery products, explaining that the Russian veterinary certificate was examined and approved during a July 2025 meeting, which resolved all SPS market-access issues related to those commodities. South Africa therefore considered that the portion of this STC concerning fish and seafood had been resolved, and reaffirmed its readiness to continue bilateral engagement on the remaining issues.

4.2.53 Australia's undue delays in opening its pork market (ID 610) - Concerns of Brazil

4.203. Brazil reiterated concern over Australia's continued delays in initiating the approval process for imports of Brazilian pig meat, noting that despite sustained efforts since 2019 - including the submission of veterinary certificates, repeated requests for clarification, and more than ten bilateral meetings - no substantive progress had been achieved. Brazil recalled that Australia had previously cited issues related to FMD regionalization as a prerequisite for beginning a risk assessment, but emphasized that, since May 2025, Brazil's entire territory had been officially recognized by WOAH as free from FMD without vaccination, eliminating any remaining technical impediments. Brazil further stressed that references to internal resource constraints could not justify prolonged inaction, underscoring the strength and international credibility of Brazil's sanitary system and expressing concern that the delays appeared inconsistent with Australia's SPS obligations regarding transparency, non-discrimination and the avoidance of undue delays. It urged Australia to promptly initiate the process, including transmitting questionnaires, scheduling an audit and providing clear timelines for next steps.

4.204. The European Union supported the concerns raised by Brazil. The European Union indicated that it had ten pending market access applications for pig meat destined to Australia, some dating back to 2016 or 2017. While noting with appreciation that one EU member State application had been approved in 2023, the European Union observed that this process had taken approximately five years from submission. The European Union encouraged Australia to accelerate progress in the approval of outstanding applications.

4.205. Supportive of WTO principles and committed to adhering to its international obligations, Australia reiterated it had engaged in good faith on Brazil's pig meat market access request. Australia had provided Brazil with information on its import conditions and evaluation process. Australia reiterated its continued engagement with Brazil on its market access interests. Australia further expressed surprise at the European Union's support for this concern. It recalled ongoing cooperation with the European Union on its pig meat market access request, including recent approvals for France and progress with Spain. Australia also highlighted that in the past it had prioritized and completed, within six months, an assessment of the European Union's request for zoning protocols for ASF and Classical Swine Fever (CSF), and had offered terms of trade in 2023, which were subsequently not accepted by the European Union. Australia encouraged the European Union to advance Australia's own market access requests in a timely manner, noting the otherwise constructive bilateral relationship between Australia and the European Union, and with EU member States.

4.2.54 Thailand's sanitary requirements on wet blue leather imports (ID 539) - Concerns of Brazil

4.206. Brazil shared its view that Thailand's requirement for a health certificate for wet blue was not aligned with the relevant WOAH guidance. Expressing its readiness for constructive engagement, Brazil looked forward to receiving a response to its proposal to establish an official, annually updated list of authorized establishments containing the guarantees requested by Thailand.

4.207. Acknowledging constructive bilateral engagement, Thailand confirmed that the DLD would inform Brazil upon completion of the ongoing review of the assurance of safety from animal diseases and the effectiveness of Brazil's official oversight of processing procedures and processing establishments for each shipment. Thailand underscored that Brazil could continue to export wet blue leather, provided that consignments were accompanied by the existing health certificate, an approach that reflected Thailand's commitment to facilitating trade and was consistent with WOAH's recommendations and Article 3 of the SPS Agreement. Thailand expressed its readiness for technical discussions towards a mutually satisfactory outcome.

4.2.55 Thailand's unjustified suspension of Brazilian exports of beef and edible offal (ID 597) - Concerns of Brazil

4.208. Brazil reiterated its concern on Thailand's continued suspension of Brazilian beef and beef offal, which was viewed as inconsistent with Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7, as well as Annex B of the SPS Agreement. Brazil recalled that the batch-based traceability system approved in 2019 and the veterinary certificate agreed bilaterally did not require individual traceability, which was used as the grounds for maintaining the measure. Brazil complained that Thailand had not shared any legislative amendment nor the risk assessment underpinning the measures, and regretted that procedural adjustments had not been addressed bilaterally, without trade disruption. Brazil remained ready to engage constructively with Thailand to clarify any outstanding issues and to restore trade as soon as possible.

4.209. Argentina expressed its support for this systemic concern and noted it would follow this topic closely.

4.210. Thailand stated that Brazil's corrective action plan and documentation were under technical review and that the outcome of the assessment, once completed by the DLD, would be conveyed to the Brazilian authorities. Being the basis of Thailand's disease prevention and control system, the traceability at the individual animal level was applied equally to domestic production, imports and exports. Thailand informed the Committee of the notification of its regulation on the "individual identification for live animals" and reiterated its commitment to continued constructive engagement with Brazil to facilitate progress and identify mutually satisfactory solutions.

4.2.56 Thailand - Suspension of beef and beef offal imports due to delays in inspection of previously approved establishments (ID 611) - Concerns of Argentina

4.211. Argentina expressed concerns over the suspension imposed by Thailand since 1 January 2025 on imports of beef and beef offal, affecting 11 packaging plants which were previously authorized to export. The reason for the suspension was, in Argentina's view, the inability to find in 2024 a date to carry out the on-site inspections, despite the efforts made by Argentina's sanitary authorities to maintain the market open. Regretting the lack of response at the bilateral level since the suspension, Argentina invited Thailand to visit its establishments in July and August 2026 and sought clarification on the duration of the visit, the number of technical staff that would participate and the establishments to be inspected. Argentina hoped to report progress at the following Committee meeting.

4.212. Recalling the need to comply with the SPS Agreement, Brazil requested being kept abreast on future developments on this topic. Noting similarities with STC 4.2.55 , Brazil evoked that this could point to broader and more systemic issues with Thailand's approval procedures.

4.213. Thailand had temporarily suspended imports of bovine meat and edible offal following the identification of imported consignments non-compliant with its national sanitary requirements. As a result, Thailand had to review the existing import conditions to ensure that Argentina's control

measures continued to meet Thailand's ALOP. Thailand further clarified that on-site inspections for high-risk products were applied in a non-discriminatory manner, as an essential component of its national sanitary verification process. Appreciating the close bilateral communication, Thailand invited Argentina to coordinate the date of the inspection with the DLD by submitting a request at least two months in advance.

4.2.57 Guatemala - Delays in the authorization of imports of egg products (ID 618) - Concerns of Mexico

4.214. Mexico explained that, in 2024, Guatemala's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) had conducted an on-site visit to the FIT establishment Nº 499 and had issued an unfavourable outcome based on its interpretation of WOAH's provisions on deactivation of avian influenza and Newcastle disease viruses. Upon Guatemala's request, Mexico had submitted technical information proving there was no sanitary risk associated with these products and subsequently shared additional information on its self-declaration as free from velogenic Newcastle disease. Regretting the lack of confirmation of the date for the proposed technical videoconference, Mexico reiterated its willingness to engage bilaterally and requested Guatemala to conclude its review process and issue a final resolution to authorize the imports of egg products from Mexico.

4.215. Guatemala stated that the adopted measures were based on scientific principles and a risk assessment, in line with the SPS Agreement and with WOAH standards, were not more restrictive than necessary, were applied in a non-discriminatory manner and did not constitute a restriction to international trade. Guatemala had shared with Mexico the results of the on-site inspection to FIT establishment Nº 499, which showed a sanitary risk linked to the non-compliance of Chapters 10.4 and 10.9 of WOAH's Terrestrial Code. Noting that Mexico's self-declaration of its status of country free from velogenic Newcastle disease was not published by WOAH, Guatemala had maintained temporary measures due to the lack of sufficient scientific evidence, in line with Article 5.7 of the SPS Agreement. Guatemala had informed Mexico that further technical information was needed prior to scheduling a follow-up bilateral meeting. Expressing its willingness to continue bilateral dialogue, Guatemala reiterated its commitment to transparency and to the procedures established by WOAH towards facilitating safe trade of egg products.

4.2.58 China's import suspension of fresh fruits (ID 532) - Concerns of Chinese Taipei

4.216. Chinese Taipei reiterated its concern regarding China's suspension of imports of pineapples, wax apples, citrus, and mangoes, and requested China to provide regulations and quarantine requirements for sugar apple, pomelo orchards, and their packing facilities. Chinese Taipei appreciated the partial resumption of market access for sugar apples and pomelos, but regretted that China did not consistently apply scientific standards to other orchards and packaging facilities. Noting its numerous requests for technical dialogue, including through a letter sent in December 2024, Chinese Taipei invited China to engage promptly, to fulfil its commitment made at the November 2024 Committee meeting and to comply with the SPS Agreement and to provide clear regulations. Chinese Taipei further requested China to provide scientific identification and risk assessment reports, recalling that the scale insects at issue were widely distributed in China and could be managed with fumigation and other quarantine treatments to minimize trade barriers. Referring to Articles 2, 3, and 5 of the SPS Agreement and relevant international guidance, Chinese Taipei urged China to engage in a science-based dialogue and resume trade for a mutually beneficial solution.

4.217. China asserted that, due to repeated detections of quarantine pests in fresh fruits imported from Chinese Taipei, it had suspended the import of fresh fruits such as pineapples, sugar apples wax apples and citrus in 2021 and 2022. In 2023, China had again detected quarantine pests in mangoes, leading to a suspension of the import from Chinese Taipei. China had notified Chinese Taipei of the resumption of the import of sugar apples and pomelo in 2023 and 2024, respectively, as well as of the registration approval for exporters who met the requirements. China urged Chinese Taipei to further improve the plant quarantine system to ensure the safety and health of fruits exported to China.

4.218. Reiterating that scale insects were widely distributed in China, Chinese Taipei asked for the relevant scientific evidence and PRA reports, and expressed its readiness to engage bilaterally in a technical dialogue to find solutions to this issue.

4.2.59 US import restrictions on apples and pears (ID 439) - Concerns of the European Union

4.219. The European Union reiterated its long-standing concern with US import restrictions on apples and pears, despite numerous exchanges and completed scientific groundwork nine years earlier. The US final notice had still not been published, without any scientific justification. The European Union indicated that, while the US market was open under a preclearance condition, this remained expensive, effectively closing the market. The European Union urged the United States to honour its SPS obligations, to base import conditions on scientific evidence, and to publish the final notice promptly to allow imports of apples and pears under the agreed systems approach.

4.220. The United States noted it was working through its administrative procedures on the request for expanded market access, and reminded the European Union of the existing import conditions. Referring to a US-EU plant health bilateral meeting the week before, the United States remained interested in maintaining discussions that would meaningfully enhance bilateral trade.

4.2.60 Morocco's import ban on ornamental plants (ID 548) - Concerns of the European Union

4.221. The European Union urged Morocco to publish and to notify the legal act providing details on the setting up of zones and on how infected/surveillance/pest-free areas were defined by Morocco for *Xylella fastidiosa*. This would provide a better understanding and more predicable trade from the affected EU member States. The European Union also asked Morocco to provide substantial responses to the questions raised by the four most affected EU member States.

4.222. Morocco referred to the recent technical meeting held in March 2025 with the IPPC focal points of the EU member States concerned, which examined the EU situation regarding *Xylella fastidiosa* and the sanitary measures in place, as well as Morocco's preventive measures. Morocco recalled that its measures complied with the SPS Agreement, namely Article 5.7, and IPPC standards, namely ISPMs Nº 2 and Nº 11. The ban was justified given the high risk of introducing the bacteria into Morocco and their potential impact on strategic production. Recalling the reasons for maintaining its measures, Morocco underscored that the implementation of the regionalization principle for ornamental plants did not provide the same assurances as for fruits plants. Looking forward to the mutual comprehension between both parties, Morocco asked the European Union the reconsider the request to refrain from raising this STC.

4.2.61 US undue delays in opening its citrus market (ID 542) - Concerns of Brazil

4.223. Brazil reiterated its concerns regarding the US undue delays in opening its market for citrus, noting that the pest risk analysis (PRA) for Brazilian lime was ready and had awaited final publication for over three years. Brazil regretted the lack of timeline and of indications of prioritization by US competent authorities. Brazil noted the ongoing discussions and argued that, even though the remaining steps were administrative, market access was still withheld. Recalling its support to STC ID 569, Brazil asked the United States to clarify the justification for the protracted delays.

4.224. Argentina was closely monitoring the situation and regretted delays in moving forward US administrative procedures.

4.225. It was the United States' understanding that APHIS had made progress on this request. Following the completion of the PRA, there were still several steps required before the publication of the initial and final notices in the Federal Register, including the development and bilateral concurrences of risk mitigation measures. The United Stated welcomed further discussions to take place in the upcoming plant health bilateral meetings.

4.2.62 US lengthy approval procedures for plant products (ID 596) - Concerns of the European Union

4.226. Acknowledging progress on some of the pending market access applications, the European Union reiterated its concerns with complex, burdensome, and lengthy US approval procedures for importing plants and plant products. The European Union regretted that overall limited progress had been made, with some EU market access requests still at the administrative

stage of drafting the initial notice, despite technical work being finalized some time ago. Only six of the 19 steps needed in the US application procedure were scientific. The European Union invited the United States to simplify its import approval procedure, avoid undue delays, and address the backlog of pending applications.

4.227. Brazil shared the concern about the delays in its applications for exporting plant and plant products to the United States. Brazil highlighted the importance of concluding PRAs without undue delay, in accordance with Annex C of the SPS Agreement.

4.228. Reiterating that the European Union exported hundreds of different types of plants and plant products to its market, the United States responded that APHIS was actively working on requests from many EU member States. The United States underscored its robust and thorough process for evaluating market access and highlighted the need to balance interests from many trading partners with available resources. Noting the diversity in capacities and approaches of regulatory authorities across the EU member States, the United States recalled that numerous requests had been finalized in recent years. To conclude, the United States expressed appreciation for the ongoing technical engagement, including in the US-EU plant health bilateral meeting in October 2025.

4.2.63 US delays in the authorization of sweet citrus fruits (ID 569) - Concerns of Argentina

4.229. Argentina reiterated its concerns about the lack of progress towards opening the US market to its sweet citrus fruits. Since 2019, the process had been at a standstill and remained unjustified. Argentina was hopeful that the situation would change and requested that the United States publish the PRA without delay to open market access for Argentina's sweet citrus fruits. In Argentina's view, the undue delays were inconsistent with Articles 2.2, 5, and 8 of the SPS Agreement, as well as with Annex C thereto. Considering this a priority, Argentina asked the United States for an estimated timeline for market access and insisted that exports would not compete with local production and would represent a minimum percentage of the US total imports.

4.230. Brazil insisted on the importance of concluding risk analysis without undue delay, in line with Article 8 and Annex C of the Agreement. Noting similarities with STC 4.2.61 , Brazil requested being kept abreast on future developments on this topic.

4.231. Acknowledging the continued bilateral engagement, the United States indicated that it was proceeding through its standard commodity import approval process and, following review and approval, a draft PRA would be released for stakeholder review for a minimum 30-day comment period.

4.2.64 EU quarantine measures on certain pine trees and other products (ID 348) - Concerns of the Russian Federation

4.232. The Russian Federation reiterated its concerns over the lack of progress in the review and approval of technical dossiers for exports of potatoes and coniferous trees. Despite the requests for the European Commission to lift the ban on the import of Russian quarantine products and to provide responses to the submitted materials, and its readiness to electronically upload dossiers once approved, the dossiers were still under review. The Russian Federation urged the European Union to consider technical dossiers without undue delay. The Russian Federation added that the lack of substantive answer demonstrated a low level of transparency, and called upon the European Union to comply with its WTO obligation.

4.3 Information on resolution of issues

4.233. No Member took the floor under this agenda item.

4.234. The Secretariat announced that it would contact Members after the June 2026 Committee meeting to seek information regarding the progress made on concerns that had not been discussed for the past two years. The Secretariat added that it would further invite Members to share additional information on the resolution, the resumption of trade or other quantifiable data. In the last similar exercise, conducted in 2024, Members had reported the resolution of 42 STCs and the partial

resolution of additional 25 concerns. Those results were made available in document G/SPS/GEN/2261.

5 OPERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPS AGREEMENT

5.1 Equivalence

5.1.1 Information from Members

5.1. No Member provided any information under this agenda item.

5.2 Pest- and disease-free areas (regionalization)

5.2.1 Information from Members

5.2.1.1 Brazil - Update on WOAH new format for online presentation of official FMD status

5.2. Now recognized as a country free from FMD with or without vaccination, Brazil reminded Members that WOAH had updated the official recognition of FMD statuses through Resolution No 13. WOAH had subsequently updated the format for presenting this information on its website, which facilitated the understanding of Members' sanitary status within the multilateral system. Referring to Article 3 of the SPS Agreement, Brazil reminded Members of the need to take into account WOAH's updated database to assess FMD risk-free regionalization.

5.3 Operation of transparency provisions

5.3.1 Update on Transparency Working Group (JOB/SPS/49, G/SPS/W/376/Rev.2, G/SPS/W/377/Rev.1 and G/SPS/GEN/2391)

5.3. The Chairperson recalled the recommendation adopted in the Sixth Review Report to create a Transparency Working Group (TWG).

5.4. Chile, on behalf of New Zealand and Chile as stewards of the TWG, reported on the Group's third meeting, held on the morning of Tuesday 10 March 2026 in hybrid format, under the agenda circulated in document JOB/SPS/49. Chile recalled the work undertaken since the inaugural TWG meeting on 3 November 2025, including the second meeting on 3 February 2026, where Members discussed contributions and guiding questions compiled in document JOB/SPS/48 and expressed strong interest in practical improvements to SPS notifications and the use of the ePing SPS&TBT Platform.

5.5. Participants were reminded of the Secretariat's available training tools, including national workshops, advanced courses, ePing clinics, the SPS webpage, the pilot mentorship programme and bilateral assistance offered by some Members. The TWG then held focused sessions on two priority themes: (i) improving notification quality and clarity, with interventions from Brazil, Chile, China, the European Union, Japan, Peru and others on issues related to notification items 5, 6 and 9; and (ii) ePing-related issues, with presentations from the Secretariat, China, the European Union, South Africa, Türkiye, Codex and others on translation features, access to full texts, and explanations for deviations from international standards. Challenges identified included overly broad notification titles, insufficiently clear descriptions, difficulties accessing notified texts, language barriers and inconsistent explanations for non-conformity with international standards.

5.6. Proposed solutions included improved structuring of notification content, stronger coordination between enquiry points and technical agencies, attaching PDF versions of notified measures, better translation tools, use of structured categories for item 8 and enhanced training. Participants also highlighted the need for continued capacity building, domestic coordination and further improvements to ePing, and one participant suggested targeted discussions on channelling comments exclusively through enquiry points.

5.7. Chile further outlined the next steps, including circulation of a written summary and compilation of challenges and proposed solutions by 23 March 2026 for Members' comments, and revised documents and work plan updates by early April 2026, followed by proposed next steps in

mid-April 2026. These proposals would draw directly from the meeting's discussions and remain open for further input. Chile noted that the meeting had successfully initiated a more structured process to organize identified challenges and practical solutions and that progress in transparency would be incremental. It informed the Committee that the transparency workshop, for which funding had been confirmed by the Secretariat, would take place in June 2026 and be incorporated into the TWG work plan. Presentations had been uploaded to the TWG webpage, and Chile's transparency guidelines would also be made available under a new section of the webpage featuring domestic good practices.

5.8. The European Union acknowledged the work of the stewards and of several TWG participants who were active on transparency. The European Union closely looked at aspects such as quality of notifications and ePing-related issues, as relevant developments were important to handle an increasing number of notifications. The European Union noted that in 2025 an all-time record of SPS notifications had been achieved, which constituted a very positive development. It finally underlined the importance of targeted training and capacity building activities on transparency, and welcomed the confirmation of the June 2026 workshop on transparency. The European Union concluded by expressing its readiness to contribute constructively to the next steps of the TWG work.

5.3.2 Information from Members

5.3.2.1 Ukraine – Comments on quality of emergency notifications

5.9. Ukraine drew the Committee's attention to the implementation of transparency obligations for emergency measures under paragraph 6 of Annex B of the SPS Agreement, referring in particular to notification G/SPS/N/MDA/33 by Moldova concerning a temporary suspension of imports of Ukrainian poultry and poultry products. Ukraine noted that the notification cited detections of metronidazole in poultry-derived products based on controls carried out by Moldova's Food Safety Agency, but neither the notification nor the underlying order provided evidence that such residues were found in Ukrainian-origin poultry, nor confirmation that the animals concerned had been fed exclusively with Ukrainian feed.

5.10. Ukraine further observed that Moldova's prior suspension of Ukrainian compound feed, adopted through Order No. 12 of 9 January 2026, was not notified to the WTO, limiting Ukraine's ability to comment as foreseen under Article 7 and Annex B (6)(c) of the SPS Agreement. Ukraine reported that the matter was being addressed through bilateral consultations, but expressed a broader concern that inaccurate or incomplete information in emergency notifications could have unintended consequences for exporters in other markets. Ukraine thanked the TWG co-stewards for their efforts and underlined its willingness to continue contributing to the TWG work. It added that it was reflecting on lessons from this situation, including whether the recommendations in G/SPS/7/Rev.5 remained adequate, what further improvements could strengthen the quality of emergency notifications, and how tools such as the ePing commenting function could help address similar challenges.

5.11. The Chairperson noted that Moldova could not attend the meeting, but that it had informed the Secretariat that it would upload its declaration under this agenda item on eAgenda.

5.3.3 Annual report on transparency and specific trade concerns (G/SPS/GEN/804/Rev.18 and G/SPS/GEN/204/Rev.26)

5.3.4 Information from the Secretariat

5.12. The Secretariat presented the 2025 Annual Report on Transparency and outlined ongoing efforts to enhance the clarity, accessibility and analytical value of the document, including greater visual harmonization with the annual report provided to the TBT Committee. In 2025, 65 Members circulated a record total of 2,496 SPS notifications, representing a 16% increase from 2024. Developing Members submitted more than half of all regular notifications, and LDCs reached a historic 27% share of these notifications. Four LDCs - Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda - were among the top ten notifiers, reflecting their practice of jointly notifying East African Community regulations. Regular notifications spanned a wide range of HS chapters, while 68% of emergency notifications concerned live animals and meat products. References to international standards

continued to vary: regular notifications cited Codex most frequently, while emergency notifications mainly cited WOAH standards.

5.13. The Secretariat further noted that Members continued to provide an average comment period of 59 days and that 2025 saw a marked increase in the number of addenda, contributing to the overall record volume of notifications. Regarding STCs, Members discussed 80 STCs in 2025, matching the 2024 total, including a record 65 concerns previously raised. Developing Members remained active participants in STC discussions. India and the European Union raised the largest number of concerns, while the European Union and China responded to the most. Only around 1% of notifications circulated since 1995 had been mentioned in an STC, although 39% of all STCs referred to a notification. The Secretariat reported that, as of March 2026, 56% of STCs discussed were considered resolved or partially resolved, and highlighted that some Members had reported resolution rates close to 90% for concerns they had raised. Finally, the report also provided information on transparency-related elements of the Sixth Review, the work of the TWG, Secretariat technical assistance activities, and digital tools such as ePing and eAgenda, as well as an overview of the work of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). The Secretariat invited Members to consult the 2025 transparency report for full details.

5.14. The Secretariat also provided an update on the STDF-funded project aimed at strengthening the use of the ePing platform to enhance transparency for market access. This was the first STDF project implemented by the WTO Secretariat and was being carried out with Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda as beneficiary countries. The Secretariat explained that the project took a holistic approach to regulatory transparency across SPS and TBT areas and combined targeted capacity building with planned technology upgrades to help public and private stakeholders more effectively monitor and respond to regulatory changes affecting trade. The project had officially been launched in Nairobi in December 2025, alongside a broader regional event, and initial implementation work had commenced. In 2026, activities would include needs assessments based on surveys and national workshops in the beneficiary countries, with outcomes to be shared with all WTO Members through a global survey feeding into the transparency work of the SPS and TBT Committees. Enhancements to the ePing platform were expected to begin in 2027. The Secretariat thanked focal points from the five beneficiary countries for their engagement.

5.15. The Secretariat noted that several technical suggestions raised in the TWG would be examined with the WTO's IT team, and recalled that a TBT triennial review recommendation to enable stakeholders to contact their own domestic enquiry points directly through ePing was being explored. Members were reminded that ePing virtual clinics remained available on request to address specific technical questions in small groups. For the first time, a walk-in ePing session had been held during the Committee week, which had facilitated useful informal exchanges with delegates. The Secretariat intended to hold such sessions regularly and invited Members to suggest topics for future discussions.

5.4 Control, inspection and approval procedures

5.4.1 Information from Members

5.4.1.1 Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States - Promoting transparency in sampling, testing, and analytic methods used to determine compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures (G/SPS/GEN/2387)

5.16. The Chairperson introduced this item by noting that five Members wished to take the floor in relation to document G/SPS/GEN/2387.

5.17. The United States noted that, while SPS capacities and science-based approaches to risk assessment and risk management had improved significantly over the previous three decades, the legitimacy and effectiveness of SPS measures ultimately depended on transparent and scientifically sound methods for sampling, testing and analysis. Although some Members made such information readily available - facilitating harmonization with international standards and helping producers understand how their products would be assessed - many did not publish or share information on these procedures, leading to confusion and avoidable trade disruptions, including in cases where outdated or scientifically unsupported methods had been used. Increased transparency in this area would allow concerns to be addressed proactively, even though publication of such information was

not explicitly covered in the SPS Agreement. The United States noted that any further work on this topic should proceed strictly within the existing transparency provisions of Article 7 and Annex B, and the control, inspection and approval procedures in Annex C, with the intention of clarifying current commitments rather than negotiating new ones. The United States concluded by thanking Members who had expressed their interest in this topic, and expressing its willingness to work with them on a proposal for a relevant thematic session to be held in November 2026.

5.18. Argentina took the floor to support the proposal presented by the United States and noted that it supported all efforts to improve transparency in SPS processes, particularly those that related to control, inspection and approval procedures. It further expressed its willingness to work with other Members on this topic towards the November 2026 thematic session.

5.19. India welcomed the initiative presented by the United States. It agreed that the methods used to assess compliance with SPS requirements were of vital importance for its exporters. India noted that sharing relevant protocols would facilitate safe trade and avoid escalating into disputes and trade frictions. In supporting this initiative, India stressed the importance of relevant capacity building initiatives.

5.20. Ecuador supported the initiative and highlighted the importance of Annex C-related practices. It expressed its availability to work with other Members on these issues.

5.21. Costa Rica expressed its support for the initiative and expressed readiness to support the work ahead towards the November 2026 thematic session.

5.5 Special and differential treatment

5.22. The Chairperson recalled that the MC13 Declaration had been addressed under agenda item 3, "CROSS—CUTTING ISSUES".

5.5.1 Information from Members

5.23. No Member provided any information under this agenda item.

5.6 Monitoring of the use of international standards

5.6.1 New issues

5.24. No Member provided any information under this agenda item.

5.6.2 Issues previously raised

5.6.2.1 European Union - ASF restrictions not consistent with the WOAH international standard

5.25. The European Union pointed out inconsistencies in the application of WOAH standards related to ASF. It considered that many Members disregarded the WOAH Terrestrial Code on the identification, treatment, and certification of tradable products and zoning. The European Union noted that zoning could be applied effectively and that ASF could be managed to ensure that legitimate trade did not cause outbreaks. ASF affected several Members, and it was therefore a shared interest to maintain free and safe trade of pork and its products. The European Union invited WTO Members to work together on this matter.

5.6.2.2 European Union - HPAI restrictions not consistent with the WOAH international standard

5.26. The European Union reiterated its concern that a significant number of Members continued to disregard their obligations under Article 6 and Annex C of the SPS Agreement by imposing country-wide trade bans after local outbreaks of avian influenza. The European Union indicated that these bans were not scientifically justified if effective movement controls were in place, and there was no justification to wait one year or more to restore disease-free status. The European Union

asked Members to follow WOAH standards and apply the regionalization principle of the SPS Agreement to allow trade from zones free from HPAI.

5.6.2.3 European Union - FMD restrictions not consistent with the WOAH international standard

5.27. The European Union pointed out inconsistencies in the application of WOAH standards related to FMD. It considered that many Members disregarded the WOAH Terrestrial Code on the identification, treatment, and certification of tradable products. Referring to outbreaks of FMD occurred in Cyprus in February 2026, the European Union underscored that FMD could be managed effectively to ensure that legitimate trade was not the cause of any outbreak. The European Union further emphasized that safe commodities should not require any type of FMD-related conditions, regardless of the animal health status the exporting country zone. Noting that FMD was affecting several WTO Members and the shared interest to maintain a free and safe trade, the European Union invited Members to correctly apply FMD-related WOAH standards.

5.28. In its update on the Observatory programme, WOAH detailed advances in its core functions through analytical reporting, thematic studies and deeper engagement with members and partners. WOAH invited WTO Members to consult the second monitoring report on its website, which presented comprehensive data-driven assessment of the level of implementation of standards across six priorities areas. Drawing from internal and external data sources, the report highlighted achievements and challenges, including the continued need to strengthen data collection and members' capacities, and provided cross-cutting recommendations aimed at improving consistency and effectiveness of implementation of standards across regions. WOAH also explained that the Observatory continued to expand its portfolio of thematic studies on topics such as zoning, animal welfare during transport and compartmentalization for avian influenza. The Observatory had also developed a new digital platform to strengthen reporting and analytical capacity to facilitate collection, processing and visualization of data. WOAH looked forward to continued collaboration WTO Members for shared evidence to support safe trade.

5.7 Follow-up to the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement

5.7.1 Report on the informal meeting

5.29. The Chairperson reminded delegates that, during the informal meeting held on 11 March 2026, Members had discussed possible actions to move forward with the implementation of other recommendations of the Sixth Review Report, aside from those related to the TWG and the mentoring system. The draft report of the informal meeting would be circulated to Members with an opportunity to provide comments. The final report is included in Annex A.

5.7.2 Information from Members

5.30. No Member provided any information under this agenda item.

6 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION

6.1 Information from the Secretariat

6.1.1 WTO SPS activities (G/SPS/GEN/997/Rev.16 and G/SPS/GEN/521/Rev.21)

6.1. The Secretariat reported on SPS technical assistance delivered in 2025, referring to documents G/SPS/GEN/521/Rev.21 and G/SPS/GEN/997/Rev.16. Since the November 2025 Committee meeting, two activities had been implemented: the second edition of the virtual course on key elements for participation in the SPS Committee, held from 1 October to 27 November 2025 with 26 participants, several of whom had already begun implementing follow-up initiatives; and a national SPS workshop held in India from 17 to 19 November 2025, attended by more than 60 stakeholders and enriched by online presentations from the Secretariat, the STDF and other Members. The Secretariat also recalled that two editions of the Transparency Champions course had been conducted since 2022, with the second concluding in June 2025. A total of 17 SPS technical

assistance activities were delivered in 2025, bringing the cumulative total since 1994 to 523, and representing a 35% decrease compared with 2024.

6.2. The Secretariat outlined the SPS technical assistance activities planned for 2026. It noted that it would maintain four online learning modules on the SPS Agreement, organize national workshops upon request and subject to available resources, and hold regional workshops based on requests by regional partners or jointly submitted by Members and regional partners. A thematic workshop on transparency would take place in Geneva on 22–23 June 2026, immediately before the informal and formal Committee meetings of that same month. Up to 30 participants from eligible Members and Observers would receive financial support to participate in this activity, and applications had to be submitted by 17 April 2026. The Secretariat also recalled that the invitation included a draft programme and noted that the TWG stewards would welcome Members' feedback on the draft programme.

6.3. The Secretariat further announced that the third edition of the "Key Elements for Participation in the SPS Committee" course would be held from 1 October to 19 November 2026 in a hybrid format and delivered in French for 25 officials with direct SPS responsibilities. The programme would include virtual training sessions on the SPS Agreement and Committee functioning, followed by a week of in-person practical workshops in Geneva during the November 2026 Committee week. Participants would be expected to identify concrete initiatives to strengthen their administrations' participation in the Committee in 2027 as a result of their participation in the activity. The Secretariat concluded by indicating that more details on both major activities announced for 2026, i.e. the transparency workshop in June and the hybrid course in October and November, would be circulated in an addendum to document G/SPS/GEN/997/Rev.16 and in the 2026 technical assistance brochure. The Secretariat confirmed its readiness to provide any additional information.

6.4. India took the floor to commend the Secretariat for having organized and successfully conducted the national workshop on the SPS Agreement in November 2025. India also acknowledged the interventions made at that workshop by the STDF Secretariat and by experts from other Members.

6.1.2 Update on mentoring system

6.5. The five mentoring relationships taking part in the pilot phase of the mentoring system were still ongoing, each managing its own process following the initial meetings convened by the Secretariat. In February 2026, the Secretariat had convened a meeting with mentors only to provide them with an opportunity to exchange views and network among themselves. Mentors had reported that their relationships were well established and productive, and shared some logistical aspects, challenges faced to schedule meetings, and useful learnings such as the importance of the process being mentee driven, building trust, and maintaining confidentiality. In general, mentors did not consider the mentorship to be highly time-consuming. Through written feedback, both mentees and mentors expressed their satisfaction with the initiative and hoped for its continuation beyond the pilot phase. Going forward, the Secretariat would prepare a detailed survey for all participants as a basis for the final report on the pilot phase. Members would be invited to decide on the continuation of the mentoring system.

6.6. Praising the opportunity for mutually beneficial exchanges of information on SPS issues, Canada underscored the importances of a mentee-driven process and of confidentiality. Interested in hearing other Members' feedback, Canada hoped for the programme to continue beyond the pilot phase.

6.7. Morocco was mentoring Cameroon, Djibouti and Tunisia towards their objectives related to transparency, enhancement of domestic coordination and active participation in the Committee, and had prepared a plan envisioning several meetings to progress towards these goals. Appreciative of the opportunity to compare different systems, to identify good practices and to enhance understanding of key elements to improve national coordination, Morocco hoped for the programme to be extended and expressed its willingness to continue participating in the initiative.

6.8. Noting the importance of the programme to strengthening the SPS framework in developing countries, Pakistan valued the constructive collaboration of Canada's Food and Inspection Agency

with its Animal Quarantine Department. Pakistan looked forward to continuing the fruitful engagement to enhance its capacity to address SPS related challenges.

6.9. The United Kingdom welcomed the structured approach of the programme and its focus on developing technical and strategic partnerships to strengthen SPS implementation. While still in the early stages, the programme had allowed for a mutually beneficial relationship, with well-defined objectives and meaningful exchanges. Noting the importance of a mentee-driven approach, the United Kingdom was of the view that the programme did not require an excessive investment of time on the mentor's side and encouraged the continuation of the programme along other learning platforms.

6.10. Echoing the positive comments, the European Union appreciated the mentee-driven nature of the programme that allowed the address of the needs expressed from its beneficiaries, Belize and Peru. The European Union expressed its availability to share its experiences and looked forward to the continuation of the programme.

6.11. Tunisia praised the usefulness of the programme to strengthen capacities of developing countries, namely on transparency, notifications and participation in the Committee. Thanking Morocco's National Office for Food Safety for their guidance, Tunisia explained that it had adopted several measures at the domestic level to address several constraints identified by mentees, linked to interinstitutional coordination and anticipation of SPS notifications. Tunisia viewed the mentoring programme as a positive experience fostering peer learning, exchanges of good practices and enhancement of institutional capacities.

6.12. Belize expressed its gratitude for the mentoring provided by European Union to four technical personnel from technical department from Belize Agriculture Health Authority. During the five meetings held so far, discussions had concentrated on exported products and exchanges would then focus on imported commodities. Going forward, conversations would on SPS risk categorization and risk-based inspection of these commodities.

6.13. Acknowledging the efforts to strengthen capacities and foster participation in the Committee, Peru thanked the European Union for the mentoring provided. This initiative was an opportunity to address challenges related to the implementation of the Agreement. Peru reaffirmed its commitment to actively participate in the programme, which contributed to enhancing the multilateral trading system and a better implementation of the provisions of the SPS Agreement.

6.1.3 STDF (G/SPS/GEN/2380)

6.14. The STDF Secretariat reported on progress in implementing its 2025–2029 strategy, noting that its new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework had been approved in December 2025 and was by then publicly available. Demand for STDF support continued to rise sharply, with more than 300 project applications submitted in 2025 and 436 additional submissions already received in early 2026, far exceeding the partnership's typical approval rate of around six projects per year. The STDF reminded Members of application timelines and highlighted that, during the November 2025 Working Group meeting, it approved three new projects and four project-preparation grants covering areas such as food safety, phytosanitary capacity, digital risk-management solutions, banana-disease surveillance, SPS compliance among women-led cooperatives and the development of a food safe jute standard.

6.15. The STDF also reported on outreach and knowledge-sharing activities, including a regional workshop with IICA in November 2025 on the use of artificial intelligence for SPS-related innovations in Latin America and the Caribbean. It noted an ongoing project-preparation grant in the CARICOM region on the use of data and AI to strengthen food-safety culture and indicated interest in collaborating with Members on related thematic work. The facility welcomed three new developing-country experts to its Working Group, representing the Andean Community, the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council and Malaysia's Ministry of Health, who would contribute to the review of applications and bring additional perspectives into STDF operations.

6.16. The STDF further highlighted that it continued to rely on financial support from its donors, noting contributions in 2025 from Australia, Canada, the European Union, Finland, Germany, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States. It also reported a funding gap of

approximately USD 3 million for the full implementation of its 2026 work plan and encouraged continued engagement from existing and prospective donors, with additional pledges under discussion. Upcoming activities included a webinar on 30 March 2026 showcasing gender-inclusive SPS capacity-building experiences, the release of several new publications, and the next STDF Working Group meeting on 30 June – 1 July 2026, to be chaired by FAO with Australia as vice-chair.

6.2 Information from Members

6.17. Australia shared information about cooperation in the Pacific region on tackling transboundary animal diseases such as avian influenza and lumpy skin disease. It also reported that cooperation with regional partners addressed phytosanitary matters and food safety. One example of such cooperation related to an initiative that started in 2008, with the establishment of the Quarantine Regulators Meeting (QRM), and grew over the years to include several actors from the region as well as the STDF and the World Bank. Australia indicated that it was strengthening Pacific regional biosecurity by hosting the QRM in September 2026 in Canberra, focusing on harmonising risk management, enhancing worker capacity, and increasing intelligence-led enforcement against pests and diseases.

7 CONCERNS WITH PRIVATE AND COMMERCIAL STANDARDS

7.1. No Member provided any information under this agenda item.

8 OBSERVERS

8.1 Information from observer organizations

8.1.1 IICA (G/SPS/GEN/2379)

8.1. IICA presented two lines of work conducted between November 2025 and February 2026: (1) the support provided by IICA and USDA to Central American countries to control the new world screwworm, which aimed at strengthening prevention and control efforts, and which lead to improved regional preparedness, technical competencies and collaboration in risk management; and (2) the partnership between IICA and USDA for surveillance and response to ASF in the Caribbean and Central American regions, to strengthen surveillance, preparedness and response to the disease, training numerous professionals in diagnostic, sampling and biosecurity.

8.2. The Secretariat reminded the Committee of the ongoing collaboration between the SPS team and IICA on a handbook of good practices for SPS Committee participation. The Secretariat would reach out to some delegates to request feedback on the draft manual and invited interested Members to express their interest in reviewing the document.

8.1.2 UNCTAD (G/SPS/GEN/2384)

8.3. UNCTAD highlighted three areas of their recent work related to SPS and non-tariff measures (NTM). Firstly, UNCTAD reported that, since June 2025, data on NTMs had been collected and updated in the TRAINS non-tariff measure database for several countries and regions. Secondly, in 2025, UNCTAD had published guidelines for the analytical pathway from NTM inventory to trade impact assessment, presenting methodologies that policy makers could use to assess the impact of NTMs using data in the database. Thirdly, regarding technical assistance and capacity building, UNCTAD was assisting Comoros in its WTO post accession process on SPS and TBT, had integrated the TRAINS databased into the trade information portal of four Pacific island countries, and delivered one online course in the Pacific, providing an overview of NTMS and their linkages to the Pacific region's gender and environmental issues.

8.1.3 AOAD (G/SPS/GEN/2376)

8.4. AOAD reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening science-based SPS systems, to ensure measures are transparent, predictable and aligned with international standards. AOAD had conducted virtual expert consultations and had produced practical recommendations and identified priority actions to enhance regional coordination in plant, and animal health, food safety and pest risk assessment. Some of the key outcomes included the development of a regional roadmap of SPS

governance, integrating scientific evidence, policy guides and operational practices, that decision makers could use to inform policy formulation and support evidence-based interventions in region. Capacity building efforts had been put in place to foster mutual recognition among labs and propose best practices for early warning, rapid response and pest management. Initiatives also included regional workshops on GAP to improve compliance with SPS measures while supporting environmental sustainability. AOAD also promoted digital innovation in SPS systems to enhance efficient, transparent and regulatory coherence. To conclude, AOAD expressed its willingness to continue cooperating with WTO Members in advancing safe trade and sustainable food systems.

8.1.4 OECD (G/SPS/GEN/2374)

8.5. The report of OECD's activities is contained in document G/SPS/GEN/2374.

8.1.5 OIRSA (G/SPS/GEN/2375)

8.6. The report of OIRSA's activities is contained in document G/SPS/GEN/2375.

8.1.6 SADC (G/SPS/GEN/2377)

8.7. The report of SADC's activities is contained in document G/SPS/GEN/2377.

8.1.7 COMESA (G/SPS/GEN/2382)

8.8. The report of COMESA's activities is contained in document G/SPS/GEN/2382.

8.1.8 IGAD (G/SPS/GEN/2383)

8.9. The report of IGAD's activities is contained in document G/SPS/GEN/2383.

8.1.9 GSO (G/SPS/GEN/2385)

8.10. The report of GSO's activities is contained in document G/SPS/GEN/2385.

8.1.10 ITC (G/SPS/GEN/2390)

8.11. The report of ITC's activities is contained in document G/SPS/GEN/2390.

8.2 Requests for observer status

8.12. The Chairperson informed the Committee that no new nor pending requests for observer status had been received.

9 ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

9.1. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that, according to the Rules of Procedure, the term of office of the Committee Chairperson finished with the conclusion of the first meeting of every year. However, the Chairperson of the CTG had not yet concluded consultations on chairpersons for the CTG subsidiary bodies under the Guidelines for Appointment of Officers to WTO bodies (WT/L/31). The Committee, therefore, agreed to postpone the election of the Chairperson until the Committee meeting in June 2026.

10 OTHER BUSINESS

10.1. No Member took the floor under this agenda item.

11 DATE AND AGENDA OF NEXT MEETING

11.1. The Chairperson recalled that the next regular meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 23-25 June 2026. The proposed calendar of Committee meetings for 2026 had been circulated as document G/SPS/GEN/2300.

11.2. The Secretariat indicated that it would prepare a summary report of the meeting based on oral interventions, complemented by Members' ability to download statements via eAgenda.

11.3. The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Secretariat would circulate relevant upcoming deadlines by email, namely:

a. for submitting statements in eAgenda: Friday, 13 March 2026;

b. for submitting comments on the Chairperson's draft report on the informal SPS Committee meeting: Monday, 23 March 2026;

c. For comments on the stewards' summary report on the Transparency Working Group meeting: Monday, 30 March 2026;

d. For submitting comments on the proposals for thematic sessions: Friday, 10 April 2026;

e. For identifying new issues for consideration under the monitoring procedure, and for requesting that items be put on the agenda: Wednesday, 3 June 2026; and

f. For the distribution of the annotated draft agenda: Friday, 5 June 2026.

ANNEX A

INFORMAL SESSION – 11 MARCH 2026

REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

At the informal meeting held on 11 March 2026, the Committee discussed the follow-up, format and topics for thematic sessions/workshops, the Committee's practice on the inclusion of STCs in the agenda after the deadline and the follow-up to the Sixth Review.

1 THEMATIC SESSIONS/WORKSHOPS

1.1 Follow-up to the Thematic Session on Science-based SPS Import Controls to Facilitate Safe Trade

1.1. In November 2025, Members had expressed interest in possible follow-up activities to the Thematic Session on Science-based SPS Import Controls to Facilitate Trade. The report elaborated by the Moderator of the session, Mr Knut Berdal from Norway, circulated as G/SPS/GEN/2373, provided an overview of the session and some of his personal takeaways. As part of a joint reflection with other Members, the European Union had requested the distribution of a draft follow-up paper in February 2026, that had been subsequently circulated as G/SPS/GEN/2392 with inputs received from some Members.

1.2. The European Union thanked the other co-sponsors of the thematic session (Norway, Canada and the United States), as well as Mexico and Egypt for their written inputs. Recalling the process leading to this joint, transparent and inclusive reflection, the European Union underscored the aim to produce an objective, non-exclusive document summarizing ideas received, without prejudice to the extent of support the issues would receive nor to the mode in which follow-up discussions would take place. The document was considered to be part of a toolbox on the outcome of the joint reflection, that the European Union considered to be concluded.

1.3. I indicated that the document was a non-binding source of inspiration for possible future follow-up activities.

1.4. One Member committed to constructively contributing to any follow-up activities. Another Member shared the view that the list of topics was a useful addition to the thematic session and provided a good opportunity for further Committee work. The Member informed the Committee it would further present a proposal for a possible thematic session on hitchhiker pests and would also share information on a collaboration and capacity building initiative within the Indo-Pacific region. Another Member underscored that it was delegates' responsibility to communicate main takeaways from thematic sessions to the relevant authorities in capital for consideration. The Member praised the EU approach to circulate a draft document and emphasized that improved national implementation would benefit both importers and exporters through improved efficiency of import controls.

1.5. I concluded by indicating that two of the proposals received for future thematic sessions were part of the follow-up to the November thematic session.

1.2 General follow-up to thematic sessions

1.6. In November, some Members had indicated the need for a joint reflection after thematic sessions to identify possible follow-up actions and next steps. This reflection could take place in the informal meeting immediately following the event or at subsequent Committee meetings, several months later. Other suggestions included having a champion to guide the follow-up to thematic sessions or discussing the follow-up as part of the formal meeting. I invited Members to share their views on the possibility of systematically adding an agenda item on the follow-up to thematic sessions in the informal meeting during the same week of the thematic session.

1.7. Four Members were sympathetic to the suggestion. One of those Members clarified that the goal of the session should be kept in mind while organizing it and that, traditionally, the report of

the meeting summarized the main conclusions of the session. That Member noted that the agenda of the meetings reflected the Agreement and that a new item would have to be anchored to certain provisions of the Agreement. Another of those Members praised the approach followed by the European Union in seeking written inputs from the Membership and noted that the follow-up might not necessarily be done by the proponents of the session nor every time. That Member shared the view that an invitation for Members' contributions would also improve interaction with capital. Another Member shared the preliminary view that it might be premature to have a discussion immediately after the thematic session and sought confirmation that this would not exclude further discussions on the topic. The Member also stated that some thematic sessions might be a sharing of best practices without a need for a follow-up.

1.8. Noting that there might not always be substance for discussion, I proposed to add an item to the agenda of the informal meeting on the follow-up to thematic sessions and learn by doing, adjusting the process accordingly.

1.3 Format of thematic sessions

1.9. I then moved on to the format of thematic sessions, reminding the Committee of its discussions in the November informal meeting, where Members had again considered several suggestions. I observed that there had appeared to be convergence, namely as it related to **including panel sessions**, the appropriate and relevant **use of interactive online tools**, and the importance of targeting an **appropriate length for the duration** of thematic sessions. In this week's meeting, I provided an opportunity for Members to continue discussions on two other suggestions from the November meeting.

1.10. **Use of a moderator to guide discussions**: I briefly recalled the discussions in the November informal meeting and invited the Secretariat to provide the requested clarification on the role of the moderator and the process for identifying and selecting moderators. The Secretariat first informed the Committee of its exchanges with the TBT team to learn about the TBT Committee's experience with using moderators, which had proven helpful and had highlighted that some aspects of the moderator's role needed to be determined on a case-by-case basis. The Secretariat then detailed the role of the moderator in the thematic sessions held in September 2025 (S&DT Thematic Session) and in November 2025 (Thematic Session on Science-based SPS Import Controls to Facilitate Trade). With respect to the nomination of moderators, the Secretariat clarified that the moderator for the S&DT Thematic Session was the facilitator for the work on S&DT in the CTD SS, while the moderator for the November thematic session was part of one of the proponents' delegations. The Secretariat also observed that moderators did not have to be Geneva-based; and that thematic sessions might not always need a moderator/facilitator. In addition, the Secretariat highlighted time management during the preparatory phase, suggesting that the moderator could play a role in managing the list of speakers to ensure sufficient time for meaningful contributions and follow-up discussions.

1.11. I then invited Members' comments. One Member, who had previously proposed the development of TORs, indicated that it no longer maintained this request based on the clear explanation and background provided by the Secretariat, and would share any future observations, as necessary. Some Members noted that there was not a one-size-fits-all approach to the use of a moderator and proposed deciding its use on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the topics/speakers. One Member also underscored the role of proponents in developing sufficiently detailed proposals to avoid unduly burdening the Secretariat with substantive aspects, and highlighted the need for further discussion on the proponents' role in setting the objective, duration and number of speakers, rather than primarily focusing on the structure. Another Member echoed the importance of proponents and advance preparation, but also encouraged Members to collaboratively engage so that interested individual Members with constrained capacity would not be deterred in submitting proposals due to any perceived burden in conceptualizing and arranging thematic sessions. One Member further echoed the value of collaborating before and after the submission of proposals and encouraged proponents to be open to revising their proposals. In addition, another Member observed that while the sharing of experiences might be the main focus of some thematic sessions, in other cases a proponent might have an objective that extended beyond information exchange, and this should be clearly communicated to the Committee for its consideration.

1.12. I then observed that Members had expressed similar comments, and summarized the key takeaways which included maintaining flexibility on the use of a moderator and on other elements of the format of thematic sessions; and recognizing the importance of the concept phase in facilitating collaborative deliberations and defining a clear objective for thematic sessions. I also highlighted the Secretariat's availability to assist with the logistical aspects of organizing thematic sessions.

1.13. **Organizing joint thematic sessions with other committees**: I then recalled a Member's suggestion in the November informal meeting to examine opportunities to hold joint thematic sessions with other committees, such as the TBT Committee. I noted that it might be easier to address this idea when there was a specific topic that called for a joint thematic session and proposed that the Committee revisit this suggestion if and when there was a proposal to hold a session on such a topic. Members appeared to be in agreement with this suggested way forward.

1.4 Topics for future thematic sessions/workshops[3]

1.14. I then moved on to the agenda item on topics for future thematic sessions/workshops where I indicated that three written explanatory proposals had been submitted by the 18 February deadline. Before discussing these proposals, I reminded the Committee of the possible option to organize a Transparency Workshop in 2026, an idea which had been raised by some Members in previous Committee meetings and the Transparency Working Group meeting. I invited the Secretariat to provide some information on this option, as it also impacted the scheduling of proposed thematic sessions for the year. The Secretariat indicated that funding would probably be available to support the workshop and that full confirmation was expected by the end of the Committee week. If the Committee agreed, only the November slot would remain for the scheduling of thematic sessions in 2026. However, the Secretariat also explained that thematic sessions could already be programmed in advance for 2027, and encouraged the Committee to bear this in mind in its discussions.

1.15. I invited Members to provide their comments on the possible scheduling of a Transparency Workshop in June 2026. No Member took the floor. I observed that Members appeared to be in agreement and indicated that I would propose, in the formal meeting, to organize this workshop in June 2026.

1.16. We then discussed Members' proposals for thematic sessions. Firstly, I drew attention to the proposal on **promoting transparency in sampling, testing, and analytic methods used to determine compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures** (G/SPS/GEN/2387) submitted by Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. The United States indicated its appreciation for Members' feedback on the proposal, noting that two other Members had indicated interest in joining as co-sponsors. The thematic session would broadly cover animal and plant-related perspectives and primary focus would be placed on private sector experiences in exporting meat and plant products. The United States explained that the proposal would also be discussed under the agenda item on control, inspection and approval procedures in the formal meeting, so as to further stimulate conversation and encourage capital-based technical consultations. The next step would be to develop a tentative agenda and engage discussions in a collaborative manner. Other co-sponsors highlighted the importance of transparency and having dialogue on the methods used by Members to facilitate trade, and how this related to existing SPS disciplines and other ISSB guidance, including from the IPPC. Some Members expressed support for the proposal, underscoring transparency as one of the basic pillars of SPS measures, while noting the importance of exchanging best practices and identifying solutions on the topic. One Member also noted that any technical aspects should be discussed in the relevant ISSB fora and further highlighted that discussions be conducted in a balanced manner, taking into consideration exporting and importing Members' perspectives while respecting the importing Member's appropriate level of protection (ALOP), as highlighted in the discussions in the Working Group on Approval Procedures.

1.17. Secondly, Australia and Canada presented their proposal on **hitchhiker pests in international trade** (G/SPS/GEN/2389). The proposal outlined key features of hitchhiker pests including their nature and contamination pathways across complex supply chains. The proposal then

[3] An updated version of the inventory of thematic sessions, workshops and information sessions (January 2000 to December 2025) would be made available via the following weblink: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_inventory.xlsx.

explained the biosecurity and trade problems posed by established hitchhiker pests before turning to the importance for the Committee to hold a thematic session for Members to share experiences and best practices, ideally in the second half of 2026. Some Members expressed their support for this proposal, underscoring the challenge of hitchhiker pests and indicating interest in sharing experiences during the thematic session. One Member queried whether the scope of the topic could be broadened to link it to a specific Committee agenda item such as control and inspection, or developed into a broader issue linked to an existing international standard. Another Member observed that this topic could be a good example of a thematic session with an information-sharing objective.

1.18. Thirdly, Saudi Arabia presented its proposal on **artificial intelligence and emerging technologies in the SPS area** (G/SPS/GEN/2381), noting how advances in AI had increasingly impacted SPS regulatory functions, and highlighting the need for Members to exchange views and experiences on how AI and related technology could be utilized in the SPS area, such as to support science-based decision-making, transparency and regulatory effectiveness. Some Members indicated their support for this proposal, highlighting the importance of digital innovation and AI as key emerging areas that warranted further exploration by the Committee, with some suggestions on potential areas of focus and areas for further development. Two Members also recognized the related work of ISSBs, and one Member drew attention to an upcoming CCFICS meeting in October 2026. Some Members also referenced previous thematic sessions, suggesting that it would be useful to review the scope of those discussions to avoid any duplication.

1.19. I then noted the Committee's interest in these three proposals and invited Members to provide comments on the potential scheduling of these thematic sessions. In response, the proponents of the three proposals indicated their availability and readiness to fill the November 2026 slot. I further invited the proponents to discuss the scheduling among themselves, ahead of the discussion of this agenda item in the formal meeting.

2 COMMITTEE'S PRACTICE ON THE INCLUSION OF SPECIFIC TRADE CONCERNS IN THE AGENDA AFTER THE DEADLINE

2.1. I then invited Members to discuss the Committee's practice on the inclusion of late STCs in the agenda, based on the recent recurring requests and given the Committee's normal practice. Although no Members had requested the inclusion of late STCs for the March 2026 Committee meeting, I still underscored the importance of hearing Members' views on how the Committee should deal with this issue moving forward. Before opening the discussions, I invited the Secretariat to outline the Committee's practice regarding STCs.

2.2. The Secretariat provided the context and relevant background information, and explained the rules of procedure, the Committee's practice, and its response to the recent cases of late submission of STCs. The Secretariat also indicated its need for guidance on how to respond to requests for the inclusion of late STCs, noting the TBT Committee's practice of including late STCs. In addition, the Secretariat explained its follow-up process after the closure of eAgenda (e.g. translation of STC titles, checking STCs, contacting Members for any clarification), and encouraged Members to submit previously raised STCs rather than new STCs, if the concern referred to the same topic, as this facilitated tracking of discussions and avoided duplication.

2.3. I then invited Members to provide their comments. Several Members indicated their view that the Committee should respect its operating rules and that Members should raise STCs by the deadline. Some of these Members recognized stakeholder pressure and coordination difficulties to submit STCs in time, but also underscored the need to respect set deadlines and provide sufficient preparation time to respond to or support STCs. In addition, some Members highlighted the importance of engaging in bilateral discussions prior to raising STCs, while recognizing that late issues could also be addressed through this approach. A few Members observed that substantive responses might not be received for late STCs and indicated their concerns with late STCs undermining the STC process. One Member also noted that although the TBT Committee had a different approach, this could be related to the different stage at which TBT STCs were raised in the regulatory process. Some Members also expressed their view that late STCs should not be the norm, while recognizing that there might be some valid cases where late STCs might be raised, and that the responding Member should reserve the right not to respond. Some Members queried why late STCs had now become an issue for the Committee and others questioned who would decide whether late STCs should be allowed (e.g. the Chairperson).

2.4. Another Member indicated its preference to allow late STCs and queried the need for the adoption of the meeting agenda in formal meetings if Members were not allowed to add an agenda item, such as an STC. This Member noted the practice of the TBT Committee and further observed that raising STCs within the deadline did not ensure a response from the responding Member. The Member also expressed the view that, although it strongly supported STCs being raised by the deadline, each Member should be able to exercise self-restraint in light of the absence of a strict rule. Otherwise, the Committee would need to make a decision to provide clear guidance. Another Member echoed the view that, while submitting STCs within the deadline was the preferred option, the inclusion of late STCs should not be prohibited. This Member further noted that there was a precedent in STCs remaining unanswered and indicated that responding Members could be given a certain timeframe for preparation of their response.

2.5. I then underscored the importance of this discussion which had highlighted that Members wished to respect the deadline for submitting STCs so as to ensure the Committee's effective functioning. However, some Members also recognized the exceptional circumstances where a Member might need to submit a late STC.

3 FOLLOW-UP TO THE SIXTH REVIEW OF THE OPERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPS AGREEMENT

3.1. Following the adoption of the report of the Sixth Review in March 2025, the Committee had created a Transparency Working Group and had launched the pilot phase of a mentoring system, both of which would be dealt with in the formal meeting. Referring to other recommendations included in the report, I recalled that in November 2025 I had presented an overview of the actions undertaken to implement those recommendations, circulated as JOB/SPS/46. I asked Members to provide feedback on additional actions that might be needed to implement those other recommendations included in the report. I proposed to remove the item "Follow-up to the Sixth Review" from the agenda of future meetings if there were no interventions on the subject, clarifying that Members could request the re-inclusion of the item if there was anything to discuss.

3.2. One Member supported continuing discussions on the implementation of the adopted recommendations of the report of the Sixth Review. Specifically referring to MRLs, the Member referred to ongoing concerns by many Members, noting the numerous STCs raised, and suggested looking again at trade facilitative approaches to setting MRLs consistent with WTO obligations. Citing the recommendation in paragraph 2.38 of part A of the Sixth Review Report (G/SPS/74) and underscoring the need to take into account the needs of developing and least-developed Members, that Member invited views on how the Committee could make progress on the recommendation.

4 OTHER SPS ISSUES

4.1. I then provided an opportunity for Members to raise any other SPS issues. However, no Member took the floor.

4.2. Before closing the meeting, I indicated that a factual summary of this meeting would be circulated for comments, and a final version would be included as an annex to the summary report of the March 2026 Committee meeting.