Food Safety and the SPS Agreement

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Health Risks

• “All diseases are products of interaction between human-being and environment.”

• Human perception of risks
  – injury versus disease risks
  – hereditary vs. non-hereditary risks
  – voluntary vs. forced risks
  – pharmaceutical vs. food risks
  – old vs. novel risks
1. Precaution
Precaution

• Environment
• “Vorsorge” 1970s - 1980s
• Rio Declaration (1992)
  – National legislation and regulation
• Applicable to food safety ?
  – Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)
  – Risk assessment or risk management ?
  – SPS Agreement Article 5:7
Precaution in human health issues

- Transportation speed exceeding 30 miles/hour
- Gas-light in the streets
- Blood donation and v-CJD?
- Mobile phones and brain tumour?
2. GMO
• Definition
  – Recombinant DNA technology and cell fusion

• Naming - gene technology, biotechnology

• Plants, microorganisms, animals (fish)

• Characteristics

• Environmental concern
  – Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

• Food safety concern - CAC
3. Developing Country Concerns
• Least developed countries - developing countries - industrialised countries

• Food importing countries - food exporting countries - …. 

• SPS Agreement
  – Article 9 : Technical assistance
  – Article 10 : Special and differential treatment
  – Article 14 : Final provisions

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Public Health Objective - Bridging Gaps between Perceived and Real Risks
Accepted by the public

Scientifically safe

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