

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

RESTRICTED

MTN.GNG/NG5/WGSP/2

29 September 1989

Special Distribution

Group of Negotiations on Goods (GATT)

Negotiating Group on Agriculture:
Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary
Regulations and Barriers

THIRD MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON SANITARY AND
PHYTOSANITARY REGULATIONS AND BARRIERS

Report by the Chairman to the Negotiating Group on Agriculture

1. The Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Regulations and Barriers met on 22 September 1989. It adopted a working agenda based on the objectives and work programme for sanitary and phytosanitary regulations agreed by Ministers at the Mid-Term Review (MTN.TNC/11 page 13). It was agreed that the secretariat would chair this meeting and that consultations would continue on finding a permanent chairman for the Working Group.
2. The Working Group held a substantive discussion of all the items on its agenda, and on the paper presented by the Nordic countries with regard to the applicability of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade to Sanitary and Phytosanitary Regulations and Barriers (MTN.GNG/NG5/WGSP/W/5), and the Communication from the United States on International Scientific Organizations (MTN.GNG/NG5/W/98). It was agreed that the Working Group should focus its attention on the substance of the desired changes in disciplines applied to sanitary and phytosanitary regulations, and determine at some later date whether these changes should be incorporated into the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade or otherwise. It was also agreed that many of the existing features of that Agreement, particularly with regard to notification and consultation, might provide a useful model for the Working Group.
3. The Working Group noted that there were various ways to interpret the term "harmonization". Whereas it was unlikely that all countries could eventually have identical sanitary and phytosanitary rules, there was scope for harmonization of procedures, such as methodologies for risk assessment, testing, diagnosis, and technologies for treatment, as well as for increased reliance on standards developed by the relevant expert bodies. The importance of the GATT's dispute settlement provisions in this area were confirmed, and there was discussion of how the necessary technical advice could best be incorporated into the dispute settlement process. A number of delegates also expressed interest in establishing an informal or ad hoc consultative process for the discussion of particular trade problems which could also include technical experts, and which would be distinct

./.

from consultations undertaken in the course of dispute settlement. The needs of developing countries in this area, not only for technical assistance but perhaps also for longer time frames for implementing changes were also discussed.

4. The Working Group supported increased cooperation between GATT and the relevant expert bodies. It was agreed that the Mid-Term Agreement did not limit this cooperation to the three organizations indicated, and that other international and regional bodies might be able to contribute positively to the Working Group. Representatives of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Plant Protection Office of FAO (for the International Plant Protection Convention) and the International Office of Epizootics participated in the discussions, informing the Working Group of recent progress in their respective technical bodies.

5. It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be decided at a later date in light of the availability of specific papers and proposals to be submitted by participants.