

ACTIVITIES OF THE SPS COMMITTEE AND OTHER RELEVANT WTO ACTIVITIES IN 2024

REPORT BY THE WTO SECRETARIAT¹

This report to the 19th Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) summarizes the 2024 activities of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee). It highlights discussions of particular relevance to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), following the main agenda items of SPS Committee meetings, i.e. Specific trade concerns (STCs); Transparency; Equivalence; Regionalization; Monitoring the use of international standards; Technical assistance; and Thematic sessions and workshops. The report also provides an update on the ongoing Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement. Additionally, the report includes a sub-section on the The MC12 SPS Declaration Work Programme adopted in June 2022, and the MC13 Declaration on the Precise, Effective, and Operational Implementation of Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) Provisions of the SPS Agreement and the TBT Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, adopted in February 2024. Finally, the report includes relevant information on the WTO Dispute Settlement and the Trade Facilitation Agreement (2017).

1 WORK OF THE SPS COMMITTEE

1.1. The SPS Committee held three regular meetings in 2024 (on 20-22 March, 26-28 June and 13-15 November).² In September 2024, the Committee also held intersessional consultations in the context of the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement. Mr Tayutic Mena of Costa Rica served as Chairperson at the March 2024 meeting. In June 2024, Ms Cecilia Risolo of Argentina was appointed Chairperson for the 2024-2025 period.

1.2. The Committee agreed on the following tentative calendar for regular meetings in 2025: 19-21 March, 18-20 June and 5-7 November.³ The Committee also scheduled intersessional consultations for January 2025 in the context of the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement.

1.1 Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement

1.3. At its November 2023 meeting, the Committee adopted the proposed process for the Sixth Review of the SPS Agreement.⁴ The Committee held dedicated discussions during the regular meetings in March, June and November 2024, as well as during intersessional consultations held in September 2024.⁵ During these meetings, Members discussed their submissions on various issues, papers and proposals on the following topics: Addressing modern challenges and emerging risks, Cooperation with international standard setting bodies (ISSBs), Regionalization, Technical assistance/S&DT treatment, Technology/IT tools, Transparency/Notification procedures, and other topics such as MRLs, Facility registration and Systems approaches.⁶ The Committee agreed on the topics for Thematic sessions and workshops based on Members' proposals.⁷

1.4. The Secretariat prepared a draft background document summarizing the Committee's main areas of work since the Fifth Review, covering the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2024.⁸ This background document will serve as the basis for Part B of the report of the Sixth Review.

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

² The reports of the March, June and November 2024 meetings are contained in documents [G/SPS/R/112](#), [G/SPS/R/114](#) and [G/SPS/R/115](#), respectively.

³ The tentative dates of the SPS Committee meetings for 2025 are contained in [G/SPS/GEN/2214/Rev.1](#) and on the dedicated webpage <https://www.wto.org/spscommittee>.

⁴ The proposed process for the Sixth Review is contained in [G/SPS/W/346](#). A page dedicated to the reviews of the operation and implementation of the Agreement is available https://www.wto.org/sps_review.

⁵ Reports of these meetings are available in summary reports of the formal SPS Committee meetings ([G/SPS/R/112](#), [G/SPS/R/114](#), and [G/SPS/R/115](#), including their annexes).

⁶ See [G/SPS/GEN/2194/Rev.5](#).

⁷ The events, workshops and training held and planned by the Committee are available at <https://www.wto.org/sps/ta>.

⁸ The draft background document was initially circulated as [G/SPS/GEN/2223](#), and subsequently revised to reflect Members' comments.

Additionally, the Secretariat prepared a draft report on the discussions held during the review process, that will serve as the basis for Part A of the report of the Sixth Review.⁹ The draft report contains information on Sixth Review proposals, related discussions and thematic sessions, by the key topics outlined above. It also includes recommendations for further work. As part of the review process, Members were invited to consider previous Committee decisions, guidelines, and recommendations, which are to be periodically reviewed and updated as part of the Sixth Review. However, no Member submitted proposals in this regard.

1.5. Several recommendations in the Sixth Review refer to the work of the IPPC in relation to the SPS Committee.

1.6. The review process is scheduled to be completed in early 2025, with the adoption of the report of the Sixth Review.

1.2 Ministerial Declarations

1.2.1 The MC12 SPS Declaration Work Programme

1.7. At the WTO 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), held in June 2022, Ministers adopted the SPS Declaration: Responding to Modern SPS Challenges.¹⁰ The Declaration instructed the SPS Committee to launch a work programme, open to all Members and Observers, to further enhance the implementation of the SPS Agreement in an effort to better manage issues related to international trade in food, animals and plants. In 2023, Members held dedicated discussions on the margins of Committee meetings and in intersessional consultations between formal meetings.¹¹ The IPPC secretariat actively participated in these discussions, providing presentations on the relevant themes covered in the five Thematic Groups. These groups were established to suggest ideas or submit proposals for discussion in the SPS Committee, each focusing on one of the themes detailed in paragraph 8 of the MC12 SPS Declaration.¹² At the November 2023 meeting, the Committee adopted a factual summary prepared by the Secretariat, detailing the discussions held by Members during the Work Programme.¹³ At that time, the Chairperson of the SPS Committee and facilitator of the Work Programme, Mr Tang-Kai Wang, prepared a draft report to fulfil the mandate given in the Declaration. This report addressed the outcomes of the Work Programme and included key findings and action undertaken, with recommendations, as appropriate, for the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13). One Member objected to the adoption of the report. Upon Members' request, the then Chairperson of the SPS Committee, Mr Tayutic Mena, prepared a factual report of the Work Programme under his own responsibility.¹⁴ At MC13, held in Abu Dhabi in February 2024, Ministers took note of all the reports submitted by the Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies, including the factual report prepared by Mr Mena. At the June 2024 meeting, the Committee adopted the draft report on the MC12 SPS Declaration Work Programme. This report contains seven findings of the Work Programme and a recommendation for the Committee to continue targeted discussions and reflections on the implementation of the SPS Agreement.¹⁵

1.2.2 The MC13 SPS and TBT Declaration on the Precise, Effective, and Operational Implementation of S&DT Provisions (MC13 S&DT Declaration)

1.8. At MC13, Ministers adopted the "Declaration on the Precise, Effective and Operational Implementation of Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) Provisions of the SPS and TBT Agreements".¹⁶ The Declaration calls for improvements in training and technical assistance and transparency-related matters to help developing and least developed country (LDC) Members

⁹ The draft report was initially circulated as [G/SPS/W/370](#) and the draft recommendations were initially circulated as a separate document, [G/SPS/W/371](#). Both documents were revised to reflect Members' comments and subsequently integrated in the Sixth Review Report.

¹⁰ See [WT/MIN\(22\)/27](#). A page dedicated to the MC12 SPS Declaration is available at <https://www.wto.org/spdeclaration>.

¹¹ See [G/SPS/R/109](#), [G/SPS/R/110](#), and [G/SPS/R/111](#), including their annexes.

¹² Detailed reports prepared by the co-stewards on the work of each of the Thematic Groups are available in [G/SPS/W/332](#) to [G/SPS/W/336](#) (March 2023) and [G/SPS/W/339](#) to [G/SPS/W/343](#) (May 2023).

¹³ The factual summary is available in [G/SPS/70](#).

¹⁴ The Chairperson's report is available in [G/SPS/71](#).

¹⁵ The Committee draft report was contained in [G/SPS/W/344/Rev.3](#), and was subsequently circulated as [G/SPS/72](#) following its adoption by the Committee.

¹⁶ See [WT/MIN\(24\)/36](#).

address the challenges they face in engaging on SPS and TBT matters in a timely manner. The Declaration also instructed officials to continue work in the Committee on Trade and Development in Special Session (CTD SS), the SPS Committee and the TBT Committee, towards enhancing the implementation of S&DT for developing Members and LDCs, in the SPS and TBT Agreements and report on any progress by December 2024.

1.9. In March 2024, the SPS Chairperson invited Members' views about this Declaration and on how the Committee should pursue further work on this topic. While the Committee was due to review the "Procedure to Enhance Transparency of Special and Differential Treatment in Favour of Developing Country Members"¹⁷ as part of the Sixth Review, no Member submitted proposals in relation to this procedure. In June 2024, the Chairperson emphasized the importance of coordination and cooperation with the TBT Committee and the CTD SS. In consultation with the Chair of the CTD SS and with a view to supporting the CTD SS in its monitoring role and in the preparation of its report to the December 2024 General Council meeting, the Chairpersons of the SPS and TBT Committees agreed to prepare reports on relevant work undertaken by their respective Committees.

1.10. In November 2024, the draft report prepared by the SPS Chairperson was shared with delegates, inviting their feedback. Subsequently, the SPS Chairperson submitted the final report to the CTD SS, summarizing work related to the MC13 S&DT Declaration.¹⁸

1.3 Specific trade concerns (STCs)

1.11. The SPS Committee dedicates a significant portion of each regular meeting to the consideration of specific trade concerns (STCs). Any WTO Member can raise concerns about the food safety, animal or plant health requirements imposed by another WTO Member. These issues may arise from the notification of a new or changed measure or from the experience of exporters. Often, other WTO Members share similar concerns. During SPS Committee meetings, WTO Members usually commit to exchanging information and holding bilateral consultations to resolve the identified concern. Detailed information on STCs discussed in the SPS Committee can be found in the [WTO Trade concerns database](#).

1.12. The WTO Secretariat compiles on an annual basis a summary of the STCs raised in SPS Committee meetings.¹⁹ From the establishment of the WTO in 1995 until 31 December 2024, Members have raised a total of [598 STCs](#), of which 129 (22%) have been primarily related to [plant health](#).

1.13. Two (9%) out of the 23 new STCs raised for the first time in 2024 related to plant health issues. These were:

- Chile's concern regarding South Africa's undue delays in providing the results of the pest risk analysis for the export of kiwifruit ([ID 594](#)), raised in November 2024; and
- The EU's concern regarding the US lengthy approval procedures for plant products ([ID 596](#)), also raised in November 2024.

1.14. The following previously raised concerns were again discussed in 2024:

- South Africa's concern regarding the EU phytosanitary measures on citrus black spot ([ID 356](#)). The concern has been discussed seven times since it was first raised in June 2013;
- The EU's concern regarding US import restrictions on apples and pears ([ID 439](#)). The concern has been discussed 19 times since it was first raised in March 2018;
- The EU's concern regarding the US non-recognition of the pest-free status in the European Union for Asian longhorn beetle and citrus longhorn beetle ([ID 471](#)). The concern

¹⁷ The procedure is contained in [G/SPS/33/Rev.1](#).

¹⁸ See [G/SPS/73](#).

¹⁹ Detailed information is available in the latest revision of the document series [G/SPS/GEN/204/*](#). These summaries are publicly available from <https://docs.wto.org/>. Information on SPS documents and STCs can also be searched through the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#).

has been discussed 11 times since it was first raised in June 2020. In June 2024, the European Union reported on the partial resolution of the concern;

- Chinese Taipei's concern on China's import suspension of fresh fruits ([ID 532](#)). The concern has been discussed nine times since it was first raised in November 2021;
- Brazil's concern regarding the US undue delays in opening its citrus market ([ID 542](#)). The concern has been discussed five times since it was first raised in March 2022;
- The EU's concern regarding Morocco's import ban on ornamental plants ([ID 548](#)). The concern has been discussed six times since it was first raised in June 2023; and
- China's concern regarding India's suspension of imports from apples, pears and marigold seeds ([ID 572](#)). The concern has been discussed twice since it was first raised in November 2023.

1.15. In addition to the above, Members discussed several pesticide MRL-related STCs in all Committee meetings in 2024, indicating growing attention to the topic. Some of the STCs related to other concerns may also refer to issues related to control, inspection and approval procedures relevant to plant health.²⁰ Members also discuss MRL-related proposals in the context of the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement.

1.16. In June 2024, the European Union provided information about the partial resolution of STC [ID 471](#), US non-recognition of the pest-free status in the European Union for Asian longhorn beetle and citrus longhorn beetle. In addition, in July 2024, the Secretariat contacted 40 Members to seek information regarding the status (resolved, partially resolved or not resolved) of their STCs that had not been raised after November 2022. Based on responses received from 25 Members, about 58% of the STCs discussed in the Committee are considered as resolved or partially resolved.²¹ Overall, 87 (68%) out of the 127 plant-related STCs are considered to be resolved or partially resolved.

1.4 Other information

1.17. In 2024, WTO Members also provided to the Committee the following general information, related either in part or entirely to plant protection:

- Information on the ePhyto certification system ([G/SPS/GEN/2210](#))²²: Ecuador (March 2024);
- Information on Ukraine's SPS situation²³: Ukraine (March 2024). Several other Members spoke in support of Ukraine under the same agenda item;
- Agricultural Applications of Precision Biotechnology - Side event co-hosted by the United States, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Guatemala, and Paraguay²⁴: United States (June 2024); and
- Measures implemented to maintain Belize free of New World screwworm *Cochliomyia hominivorax* (Coquerel) ([G/SPS/GEN/2240](#))²⁵: Belize (June 2024).

1.18. In addition to the above, several Members provided information on initiatives and activities related to setting pesticide MRLs.²⁶

1.19. In March, June and November 2024, the IPPC presented reports on relevant activities contained in documents [G/SPS/GEN/2199](#), [G/SPS/GEN/2233](#) and [G/SPS/GEN/2264](#), respectively. In March 2024, the IPPC referred to the CPM-18, which addressed revisions of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), adjustments to the standard-setting procedure, and proposals for new topics. Side sessions covered e-commerce, Banana *Fusarium* Tropical Race 4

²⁰ See [G/SPS/R/112](#) (March 2024), [G/SPS/R/114](#) (June 2024) and [G/SPS/R/115](#) (November 2024).

²¹ See [G/SPS/GEN/2261](#).

²² See [G/SPS/GEN/2210](#) and section 2.1.3 in [G/SPS/R/112](#) (March 2024).

²³ See section 2.1.4 in [G/SPS/R/112](#) (March 2024).

²⁴ See section 3.1.2 in [G/SPS/R/114](#) (June 2024).

²⁵ See [G/SPS/GEN/2240](#) and section 3.1.3 in [G/SPS/R/114](#) (June 2024).

²⁶ See [G/SPS/R/112](#) (March 2024), [G/SPS/R/114](#) (June 2024) and [G/SPS/R/115](#) (November 2024).

(TR4) and system approaches. The IPPC also highlighted insights from the CPM Bureau, the IPPC Strategic Planning Group (SPG) documents, and its Observatory activities presented in the WTO [Workshop on Transparency](#). Additionally, the IPPC shared progress on the ePhyto Solution, the Africa Phytosanitary Programme (APP), being piloted in 11 African countries, and the adoption of the global IPPC Communications Strategy 2023-2030. In June 2024, the IPPC highlighted outcomes of the CPM-18, in particular the adoption of four international standards, revisions to the Standard-Setting Procedure, and revisions of recommendations on sea containers. It also highlighted progress on the ePhyto Solution and the ongoing APP. In November 2024, the IPPC informed the Committee that the CPM-19 was tentatively scheduled for 17-21 March 2025. Possible topics for discussion included the adoption of standards, the review of proposals for IPPC's work programme, financial planning and an assessment of the IPPC Observatory. Recommendations by the CPM Bureau included to contact the two other sisters and relevant FAO divisions to jointly work towards One Health and on the IPPC's strategic framework. The IPPC provided updates on meetings of the Standards Committee, the Implementation Committee, and the Observatory, as well as on ePhyto, with approximately 200,000 phytosanitary certificates being exchanged monthly. CPM had established focus groups on climate change and phytosanitary issues, sea containers, and the safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid.

1.20. On several occasions, Members emphasized the importance of in-person attendance by representatives of the ISSBs at SPS Committee meetings to maintain and strengthen the connection between the Committee and the ISSBs.

1.21. In 2023, the Committee agreed for the Secretariat to send a letter on behalf of the Chairperson to the six organizations with outstanding requests for observer status to the SPS Committee, which had been pending for some years.²⁷ The letter indicated that the Committee had been unable to reach a consensus on their requests and invited them to renew their interest if they still wished their requests to be considered. In January 2024, the Committee received a renewed expression of interest for observer status from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).²⁸ In March 2024, the Chairperson indicated that it would not be possible to reach consensus to grant observer status to the CBD, and the Secretariat informed the CBD accordingly. In addition, the five other organizations with pending requests did not indicate renewed interest in their requests for observer status. The Committee agreed to remove the five organizations from the list of pending requests on [G/SPS/W/78/Rev.15](#).²⁹

1.5 Transparency

1.22. WTO Members have a legal obligation to notify new or modified draft SPS measures when these deviate from the relevant international standards, including ISPMs. The recommendations adopted by the SPS Committee, however, encourage the notification of all new or modified measures even when these conform to international standards.³⁰ Although this recommendation does not change the legal obligations of WTO Members, it enhances transparency regarding the application of ISPMs.

1.23. In 2024, a total of [2,147 SPS notifications](#) were submitted to the WTO. Of these, [1,280](#) were regular (plus [27 revisions](#)) notifications, and [176](#) were emergency (plus [one revision](#)) notifications; the remainder consisted of [addenda and corrigenda](#). A total of [360](#) (17%) of the 1,280 regular notifications and [eight](#) (0.4%) of the 176 emergency ones identified plant protection as their main objective. A majority of these ([168](#) of the 360 regular plant protection notifications and the [eight](#) emergency ones) indicated conformity with a relevant ISPM. The [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#), released in 2022, allows easy access to and management of all WTO SPS-related documentation, including notified SPS measures, contact lists of national notification authorities (NNAs) and enquiry points (NEPs), STCs (see section 1.3 above), as well as other SPS-related documents circulated at the WTO. An ePing App is available since July 2022, allowing users to receive alerts on notifications of interest directly on their mobile phones. The [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#) was the focus of the

²⁷ Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC); Center for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI); Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES); International Cocoa Organization (ICCO); and International Vine and Wine Office (OIV).

²⁸ See [G/SPS/GEN/121/Add.2/Rev.2](#) and section 8.2.2 in [G/SPS/R/112](#) (March 2024).

²⁹ The list of observers to the SPS Committee as of 31 December 2024 is contained in [G/SPS/W/78/Rev.16](#).

³⁰ See paragraph 2.3 in [G/SPS/7/Rev.5](#).

[Workshop on Transparency](#) held in March 2024³¹. This workshop brought together government officials from SPS NNAs and NEPs to engage in technical discussions on SPS transparency-related work and to exchange experiences on the use of online transparency tools. In June 2024, the Secretariat reported on the approval of an STDF project ([STDF PG 1000](#)) to enhance the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#). The project seeks to support market access for developing and LDC Members by improving transparency of SPS and TBT measures. It will focus on enhancing clarity, predictability, and regulatory coordination on SPS and TBT regulations in Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda, as pilot countries. Project outputs will include a needs assessment, stakeholder mapping, and the development of training materials and workshops.

1.24. In the context of the Sixth Review, Brazil, Canada, Chile, the European Union, India, and New Zealand submitted proposals for discussion on transparency and notification procedures.³² The Committee is discussing draft recommendations on transparency, including the possible creation of a working group.³³

1.6 Equivalence

1.25. The guidelines on the implementation of Article 4 of the SPS Agreement on equivalence note, *inter alia*, the work undertaken on the subject in the Codex, WOHAI and the IPPC, and encourage the further elaboration of specific guidance by these bodies. No contributions were made by any of the standard-setting bodies in 2024 under this agenda item. In 2024, no Member submitted any notification on the [recognition of equivalence](#) of another Member's SPS measures. A total of 11 notifications have been submitted since 1995.

1.26. In the context of the Sixth Review, Indonesia submitted a proposal for discussion on systems approaches. A Thematic sessions and workshops on Innovative Regulatory Approaches to Facilitate Safe Trade, which will include discussions on addressing the challenges of a systems approach to minimize phytosanitary risks, is scheduled for March 2025.³⁴

1.7 Regionalization

1.27. Article 6 of the SPS Agreement requires that measures take into account pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence. In the context of the SPS Committee, this concept is frequently referred to as "regionalization". Guidelines on regionalization³⁵ adopted by the SPS Committee identify the type of information normally needed for the recognition of pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence, as well as typical administrative steps in the recognition process. The Committee agreed to monitor the implementation of Article 6 based on information provided by WTO Members.

1.28. The WTO Secretariat prepares an annual report on the implementation of Article 6, summarizing (i) requests for recognition of pest- or disease-free areas or areas of low pest or disease prevalence; (ii) determinations on recognition of regionalization; and (iii) Members' experiences in the implementation of Article 6 and the provision of relevant background information on their decisions to other interested Members. The Secretariat's annual report covering the period from 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2024, based on information provided by WTO Members through notification and at SPS Committee meetings, was circulated to Members in May 2024.³⁶ Relevant issues outlined in the report included a declaration of country freedom from *Xylella fastidiosa*.

1.29. In the context of the MC12 SPS Declaration Work Programme, Thematic Group 3 held extensive discussions on regionalization.³⁷ In the context of the Sixth Review, Canada, the

³¹ More information is available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_1803202410_e/sps_1803202410_e.htm. The report of the Workshop is available at [G/SPS/R/113](#).

³² See [G/SPS/W/367](#) (Brazil), [G/SPS/W/349](#) (Canada), [G/SPS/W/364](#) (Chile), [G/SPS/W/353](#) (European Union), [G/SPS/W/356](#) (India), and [G/SPS/W/348](#) (New Zealand).

³³ See draft recommendations in the latest version of [G/SPS/W/371](#).

³⁴ Indonesia's proposal is available in [G/SPS/W/365](#). The draft programme of the [thematic session](#) is available in the latest revision of document [G/SPS/GEN/2283](#).

³⁵ See [G/SPS/48](#).

³⁶ See [G/SPS/GEN/2227](#).

³⁷ Detailed reports of the dedicated discussions are available in [G/SPS/W/336](#) and [G/SPS/W/341](#).

European Union, and India submitted proposals for discussion on regionalization. A Thematic sessions and workshops on Innovative Regulatory Approaches to Facilitate Safe Trade, including discussions on adaptation to regional conditions, is scheduled for March 2025.³⁸

1.8 Monitoring the use of international standards

1.30. The procedure adopted by the SPS Committee to monitor the use of international standards invites WTO Members to identify specific trade problems they have experienced due to the use or non-use of relevant international standards, guidelines or recommendations.³⁹ These problems, once considered by the SPS Committee, are drawn to the attention of the relevant ISSBs. No new nor previously raised issues related to plant protection were raised since the issuance of the previous report.

1.31. The WTO Secretariat prepares annual reports on the monitoring procedure summarizing the standards-related issues that the Committee has considered, and the responses received from the relevant ISSBs. The Secretariat's annual report covering the period from 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2024 was circulated to Members in May 2024.⁴⁰

1.32. In the context of the Sixth Review, New Zealand submitted a proposal for discussion on the Procedure to Monitor the Process of International Harmonization.⁴¹

1.9 Technical assistance

1.33. At each of its meetings, the SPS Committee solicits information from WTO Members regarding their technical assistance needs and activities. The IPPC's reports to the Committee summarized some of the activities of the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee.

1.34. Several Members, including the European Union⁴², the United States⁴³, and Canada⁴⁴ shared information about SPS technical assistance activities provided. Similarly, Belize⁴⁵ informed of the technical assistance received. In addition, several observer organizations outlined their technical assistance activities to the Committee.⁴⁶

1.35. Document [G/SPS/GEN/997/Rev.14](#) issued in 2024 provides information on all WTO technical assistance activities in the SPS area planned for the calendar year. National seminars were provided upon request by WTO Members. Further information on SPS activities is available through <http://www.wto.org/sps/ta>.

1.36. Before the March SPS Committee meeting, the WTO Secretariat circulates its report entitled "SPS Technical Assistance and Training Activities", containing detailed information on all SPS-specific technical assistance activities undertaken by the WTO Secretariat from 1994 to the end of the previous year.⁴⁷

1.37. The IPPC participated in the 2024 [Workshop on Transparency](#), providing an update by on the monitoring of the implementation of international standards. The IPPC was also involved in the second edition of the [SPS Transparency Champions Course](#), held in English in September/October 2024, where participants developed an action plan and will report back on its progress during a

³⁸ Members proposals are available in documents [G/SPS/W/349](#) (Canada), [G/SPS/W/353](#) (European Union), and [G/SPS/W/357](#) (India). The draft programme of the [thematic session](#) is available in the latest revision of document [G/SPS/GEN/2283](#).

³⁹ See [G/SPS/11/Rev.1](#).

⁴⁰ See [G/SPS/GEN/2228](#).

⁴¹ See [G/SPS/W/348](#).

⁴² See section 7.2.1 in [G/SPS/R/114](#) (June 2024).

⁴³ See section 6.2.1 in [G/SPS/R/115](#) (November 2024).

⁴⁴ See section 6.2.2 in [G/SPS/R/115](#) (November 2024).

⁴⁵ See section 6.2.1 in [G/SPS/R/112](#) (March 2024).

⁴⁶ See [G/SPS/R/112](#) (March 2024), [G/SPS/R/114](#) (June 2024) and [G/SPS/R/115](#) (November 2024).

⁴⁷ Document [G/SPS/GEN/521/Rev.19](#) contains information on the technical assistance activities undertaken by the WTO Secretariat from 1994 to the end of 2023. The most updated information is available in the latest revision of document [G/SPS/GEN/521](#).

follow-up session in Geneva in June 2025. Additionally, the IPPC participated virtually in the [regional SPS workshop for French-speaking Africa](#), held in December 2024 in Morocco.

1.38. In the context of the Sixth Review, Canada, the European Union, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom submitted proposals for discussion on technical assistance and S&DT.⁴⁸

1.10 Thematic sessions and workshops

1.39. In the context of the Sixth Review, the SPS Committee organized several thematic sessions on the topics proposed by Members. The IPPC contributed to some of these events through presentations.

1.40. In March 2024, the Committee held a [Workshop on Transparency](#).⁴⁹ In June 2024 meeting, the Committee held a [Thematic Session on Digital Tools](#).⁵⁰ In November 2024, the Committee held a [Thematic Session on Emerging Risks and New Agricultural Technologies to Address Them](#)⁵¹, and a [Thematic Session on Codex Guidelines for Voluntary Third-Party Assurance Programmes](#).⁵² The Committee agreed to organize a thematic session dedicated to innovative regulatory approaches to facilitate safe trade as a follow-up to the November thematic session on emerging risks and modern challenges⁵³, to be held in March 2025.

1.11 Dispute Settlement

1.11.1 The WTO Dispute Settlement Procedure

1.41. Any WTO Member may invoke the formal dispute resolution procedures of the WTO if they consider that a measure imposed by another WTO Member violates any of the WTO Agreements, including the SPS Agreement. If formal consultations on the problem are unsuccessful, a WTO Member may request that a panel be established to consider the complaint.⁵⁴ A panel of three individuals considers written and oral arguments submitted by the parties to the dispute and issues a written report of its legal findings and recommendations. Until December 2019, the parties to the dispute could appeal a panel's decision to the WTO's Appellate Body. However, the Appellate Body has not been operative since the end of 2019 due to a lack of quorum. The Appellate Body examined the legal findings of the panel and could uphold, modify or reverse them.

1.42. According to the SPS Agreement, when a dispute involves scientific or technical issues, the panel should seek advice from appropriate scientific and technical experts. Scientific experts have been consulted in all but one SPS-related dispute. The experts are usually selected from lists provided by the relevant international organizations, including the ISSBs referenced in the SPS Agreement. The parties to the dispute are consulted in the selection of experts and regarding the information solicited from the experts.

1.11.2 SPS Disputes

⁴⁸ See [G/SPS/W/349](#) (Canada), [G/SPS/W/353](#) (European Union), [G/SPS/W/348](#) (New Zealand), and [G/SPS/W/360](#) (United Kingdom).

⁴⁹ The programme, presentations and recordings are available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_1803202410_e/sps_1803202410_e.htm.

⁵⁰ The programme, presentations and recordings are available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_2506202410_e/sps_2506202410_e.htm.

⁵¹ The thematic session was based on a joint proposal by Canada and the European Union (see [G/SPS/W/369](#)). The programme, presentations and recordings are available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_11112024_e/sps_11112024_e.htm.

⁵² The thematic session was based on a proposal by Belize ([G/SPS/W/355](#) and [G/SPS/W/362/Rev.1](#)). The programme, presentations and recordings are available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_12112024_e/sps_12112024_e.htm.

⁵³ The thematic session is based on proposals by Australia ([G/SPS/W/361](#)), India ([G/SPS/W/357](#)), Indonesia ([G/SPS/W/365](#)), and the United States ([G/SPS/W/350](#)). The draft programme of the thematic session is available in the latest revision of document [G/SPS/GEN/2283](#).

⁵⁴ A flow chart of the dispute resolution process can be consulted at http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/disp2_e.htm.

1.43. As of January 2025, 631 complaints have formally been raised under the WTO's dispute settlement procedures. Of these, 54 have concerned SPS issues, and panel (and as the case may be, Appellate Body) reports have been issued in 15 SPS-related disputes.

1.44. In 2024, South Africa requested consultations with the European Union on the EU additional measures concerning the importation of citrus fruits from South Africa ([EU-Citrus Fruit II](#)). As of January 2025, the panel has been established but not yet composed.

1.45. Five panel reports have concerned plant pests and quarantine requirements: (i) the United States' complaint about Japan's requirement for testing each variety of fruit for efficacy of treatment against codling moth ([Japan-Agricultural Products](#))⁵⁵; (ii) the United States' complaint about Japan's set of requirements on apples imported from the United States relating to fire blight ([Japan-Apples](#))⁵⁶; (iii) New Zealand's complaint against Australia's restrictions on apples ([Australia-Apples](#))⁵⁷; (iv) Mexico's complaint against Costa Rica's restrictions on fresh avocados ([Costa Rica-Avocados](#));⁵⁸ and (v) Costa Rica's complaint on Panama's measures concerning the importation of certain products ([Panama – Import Measures](#)).⁵⁹

1.46. The developments of these and other disputes can be followed at <http://www.wto.org/disputes>.

1.12 Trade Facilitation

1.47. The WTO's multilateral Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which entered into force in 2017, aims to enhance the movement, release and clearance of goods across borders. The TFAs 36 provisions set out requirements for border agencies to streamline border formalities, improve transparency and enhance intra-agency and cross-border cooperation. It requires each WTO Member to establish a national committee to oversee its implementation.

1.48. As of 31 December 2024, 160 out of the 166 Members, representing 96% of the WTO's Membership, have deposited their [ratification of the Agreement](#).⁶⁰

1.49. Under the TFA, developing and LDC Members can self-designate which provisions they will implement either immediately, after a transition period, or upon receiving assistance and support for capacity building. By the end of 2024, developing and LDC Members had notified a 73% rate of [implementation commitments](#).⁶¹

1.50. In order to meet the national implementation deadlines and reap the full benefits from implementation of this Agreement, the successful integration of plant protection authorities into national discussions on trade facilitation is essential. Indeed, the objectives of trade facilitation and plant protection are mutually reinforcing. Trade facilitation supports trade in safe plant products by promoting more efficient and effective controls, such as through a greater focus on inspections on high-risk products, while also promoting checks before or after the border to avoid the creation of bottlenecks.

1.51. In March 2024, the WTO Secretariat delivered a presentation highlighting the synergies between the TF and SPS Agreements concerning control, inspection, and approval procedures.⁶²

⁵⁵ The panel report is contained in [WT/DS76/R](#). The Appellate Body report is contained in [WT/DS76/AB/R](#).

⁵⁶ The panel report the panel is contained in [WT/DS245/R](#). The Appellate Body report is contained in [WT/DS245/AB/R](#).

⁵⁷ The panel report is contained in [WT/DS367/R](#). The Appellate Body report is contained in [WT/DS367/AB/R](#).

⁵⁸ The panel report is contained in [WT/DS524/R](#).

⁵⁹ The panel report is contained in [WT/DS599/R](#).

⁶⁰ In 2024, Timor Leste and Comoros acceded the WTO, bringing the total number of Members to 166.

⁶¹ Developed Members were required to implement all provisions of the TFA from its entry into force on 22 February 2017.

⁶² See section 4.4.2 in [G/SPS/R/112](#) (March 2024).