

4th MEETING OF THE COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (CPTPP) COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (SPS COMMITTEE)

COMMITTEE REPORT

1. The 4th meeting of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measure (SPS) was held virtually on 28 and 29 June 2022. Delegates from the following CPTPP members participated: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. Mr. Yap Jun Hong of the Ministry of Trade & Industry, Singapore, chaired the Committee meeting.
2. The Committee meeting agenda is attached as **ANNEX A**.
3. A summary of the Committee's discussion and any outcomes confirmed under the respective agenda items are set out below.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Committee meeting agenda was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 2: UPDATE ON COMPETENT AUTHORITIES AND CONTACT POINTS

5. Australia shared that there was some organisational restructuring following their Federal Election in May 2022 and provided an update to the Chair on the contact points accordingly. Viet Nam also shared an update on their competent authorities and contact points, which they would provide to CPTPP members in writing. The Chair suggested that the list of competent authorities and contact points could be circulated to all CPTPP members for any further updates required.

AGENDA ITEM 3: ADAPTATION TO REGIONAL CONDITIONS

6. Australia shared that it recently published guidance for its trading partners and stakeholders on Australia's processes for evaluating the animal health status of countries, zones and compartments for imports of animals and products of animal origin and was working with Singapore on regionalisation zoning arrangements for animal commodity trade. Australia also updated that under the IPPC-wide review of international standards for phytosanitary measures, ISPM 4 (Requirements for the establishment of pest free areas) would be due for adoption in 2023. Building on Canada's suggestion at the previous Committee meeting to facilitate information sharing via a specified format, Australia would be including these developments in the information sharing document for circulation to all CPTPP members after the meeting. The Chair encouraged all members to propagate such information sharing, in the spirit of transparency.

7. Canada and Singapore shared their experiences and arrangements that had been put in place with regard to adaptation to regional conditions for African Swine Fever (ASF) and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). On ASF, Canada provided an update on its negotiations of zoning arrangements, including with some CPTPP members, to minimise trade disruption in an event of an ASF incursion into Canada. On HPAI, Canada noted its statement at the June 2022 WTO SPS Committee meeting regarding the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) establishment of control zones in response to recent outbreaks and calling upon trading partners to limit any trade measures to these control zones based on the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) guidelines. Viet Nam also shared an update on their development of vaccines for ASF that they hoped to work with other CPTPP members on.

AGENDA ITEM 4: EQUIVALENCE

8. Australia shared their experience and progress in negotiating with France on new certification arrangements for raw milk cheese. Australia would be including these developments in the information sharing document for circulation to all CPTPP members after the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 5: MATTERS RELEVANT TO WTO SPS COMMITTEE / CODEX / OIE / IPPC MEETINGS

9. Australia, Japan, Canada and New Zealand shared information on their activities in the WTO SPS Committee, Codex, and IPPC, and invited other CPTPP members to work jointly in these fora.

10. On WTO SPS Committee matters, some CPTPP members shared that they had raised specific trade concerns. On the recent WTO thematic session on the use of remote and virtual audit and verification in regulatory frameworks, Japan commented that there were both advantages and limitations and hence, remote audit would be one of the available tools to supplement rather than replace physical audits. To further discuss on this issue, Australia encouraged CPTPP members to participate in a symposium that it was hosting in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) in Vienna in October 2022. Following up on the outcomes of the recent 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), Canada commended the collective achievement of WTO members in pushing through an SPS Declaration and shared that it was preliminarily considering participating in the second theme in the work programme on "*How to support basing SPS measures on scientific evidence and principles*" and invited CPTPP members to reach out if there was interest to collaborate.

11. As Chair of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS), Australia updated on the work towards the 26th session of the CCFICS (CCFICS 26) to be held in May 2023. New Zealand, as Chair of the CCFICS electronic working group on Equivalence, also provided an update on two key workstreams, viz. (i) the revised draft document "*Guidelines on recognition and maintenance of equivalence of national food control systems*", which was targeted for finalising by CCFICS 26, and (ii) consolidation of all existing Codex guidelines on equivalence. CPTPP members exchanged views on the workstreams. New Zealand encouraged any CPTPP members not already participating to join the electronic working group.

12. Australia updated that it was the new Chair of the IPPC Standards Committee with effect from May 2022.

AGENDA ITEM 6: TRANSPARENCY

13. On the development of a procedural document related to transparency to help CPTPP Parties implement the provisions in a consistent and efficient manner, Canada updated that a draft document would be circulated to CPTPP members for comments intersessionally. Canada shared a draft document with the CPTPP working group on Transparency on 28 July 2022 (Ottawa time).

AGENDA ITEM 7: CERTIFICATION

14. The Committee noted the report of the ad hoc Certification Working Group, which was chaired by New Zealand, and confirmed for the Working Group to continue its work on the development of Model Certificates and promotion of electronic certification. New Zealand shared that it was planning to host a virtual meeting sometime in September 2022 that would be open to all CPTPP members to further discuss and take the work forward. The Chair directed the Working Group to provide a progress report at the next CPTPP SPS Committee meeting. CPTPP members also discussed Australia's suggestion on leveraging the Codex Guidance on Paperless Use of Electronic Certificates for implementation of electronic certification, on which New Zealand expressed interest to cooperate with Australia in this area.

AGENDA ITEM 8: COOPERATION

15. Australia and Singapore shared their experiences on remote audit and verification. Given the usefulness of the sharing, the Committee confirmed to maintain information sharing on the use of remote audit and verification as a standing agenda item for future Committee meetings. There was in-principle agreement for Australia's suggestion that the Committee establish an electronic working group on audit matters, and Australia would circulate a paper intersessionally to give a sense of the terms of reference for the electronic working group, for further discussion amongst CPTPP members. New Zealand noted that remote audit for export market access was different from remote verification for domestic regulatory purposes and it was therefore important that the terms of reference focussed on trade between CPTPP members. Canada expressed support for this initiative and New Zealand's comment.

16. Australia presented on the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Import Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) Guideline for Pesticides. Canada and New Zealand supported having further discussion on this issue and reiterated the importance of referencing Codex and applying risk-based assessments. The Committee confirmed to have this issue included as a standing agenda item for future Committee meetings to allow CPTPP members to share on their current systems and MRL approaches.

AGENDA ITEM 9: OTHER MATTERS

17. CPTPP members updated and exchanged views on the ongoing UK accession process.

AGENDA ITEM 10: NEXT MEETING

18. The Committee noted the intention to hold the 5th CPTPP SPS Committee meeting in conjunction with the Commission meeting in 2023, with more information to be provided by New Zealand, as the next Chair of the CPTPP Commission, when ready.

AGENDA ITEM 11: COMMITTEE REPORT

19. The Committee confirmed to finalise the Committee report via email correspondence.

ANNEX A

AGENDA FOR THE 4TH MEETING OF THE CPTPP SPS COMMITTEE

- AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
- AGENDA ITEM 2: UPDATE ON COMPETENT AUTHORITIES AND CONTACT POINTS
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- AGENDA ITEM 6: TRANSPARENCY
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