



# UNFSS Briefing session for China, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Jointly organized by UNFSS, Ministry of Commerce of China (MOFCOM) and the China Certification and Accreditation Institute (CCAI)

Rainbow Hotel, Beijing

# Total 53 participants

- Approximately 29 from public sector
- Approximately 21 from private sector (and 3 others)
- Welcome speech by Dr. Qiao, Director of the China Certification and Accreditation Institute (CCAI)
- Closing statement by Mr. GU Shaoping, Deputy Director-General, Certification and Accreditation Administration of the People's Republic of China

# List of speakers

- 1.) Dr. Baisheng AN, Head, WTO Division, MOFCOM
- 2.) Dr. Qiao, Director, China Certification & Accreditation Institute
- 3.) Mr. Frank Grothaus, UNFSS Representative
- 4.) Prof. Jianping ZHANG, Director, Department of International Economic Research, National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC)
- 5.) Prof. Qinwei GAO, Central University of Finance and Economics (CUFE)
- 6.) Dr. Xiaohui LIANG, China National Textile and Apparel Council, CSR department
- 7.) Qiju MA, China Quality Certification Centre
- 8.) Jianqi CAI, China National Institute of Standardization
- 9.) Dr. Jianjun JI, Department of International Economic Cooperation, Institute for International Economic Research, National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC)
- 10.) Yi SA, State Food and Drug Administration
- 11.) Ying MA, China Director, Solidaridad
- 12.) Dr. Tao HU, World Resources Institute/ Beijing Normal University affiliated

# List of speakers (cont'd)

- 13.) Li LI, Research Center for Technical Barriers to Trade of University of International Business and Economics
- 14.) Wen YE, Bureau Veritas China
- 15.) Shengzhu ZHANG, WTO Guide
- 16.) Daqing Qi, Chiatai Qingehunhao Pharmaceutical Co. LTD
- 17.) Xingang FENG, tcm.cn
- 18.) Joshua Wickerham, UNFSS
- 19.) Shaoping GU, Deputy Director-General, Certification and Accreditation Administration of the People's Republic of China

# Main issues of discussion during the meeting

VSS recognized as a **reality and an important and strategic issue** that should be proactively addressed and can create win-win opportunities:

- a) by **enhancing competitiveness** of producers/ exporters in premium markets
- b) by **promoting sustainable development** in China
- c) besides, developing policies and a framework for VSS can **narrow the gap between national and international standards**
  - strengthen China's involvement in international standard setting processes
  - At national level: recognize the fact that Chinese middle class is rising and also becoming more aware of and requiring products compliant with certain standards (such as food safety, e.g. milk powder scandal, but increasingly also environmental and social concerns) → **domestic market relevance**

# Suggested themes for UNFSS work

- Minimizing the **negative effects** and maximizing the **positive effects** of VSS for developing countries
- Focus on developing country use of VSS
- Focus on **implementation of standards** since mechanisms to ensure proper implementation are often lacking
- Focus on **common criteria** for all standards (such as requirements for working hours)
- Assess where VSS are either promoting or restricting free trade
- Support for **SMEs**
- Better understand where VSS are increasing social welfare or sustainable development (**impacts**), including better scientific understanding of VSS implementation and impacts

# Suggested themes for UNFSS work (cont'd)

- Work with the Chinese government to put forth requirements on VSS and **integrate VSS as tools into national strategies** and analyze where standards **enhance competitiveness**
- Learn about **other countries' experiences** in implementing VSS
- Focus on **concrete substantial issues and concrete achievements**, such as orderly and sequential approach to how standards are set and used to **increase transparency**

# Suggested UNFSS activities

- Identify stakeholders and their **needs**
- Development and use of tools for evaluating standards, such as how VSS **impact** trade
- Platform to discuss increasing information for consumers
- Research and analytical support on **cost-benefit analysis** of VSS (costs and benefits of compliance with standards need to be better understood, quantified and burden distributed fairly) and developing guidelines on setting of/ compliance with standards
- **Capacity-building** of stakeholders about VSS
- Research around how Chinese multinational companies can use existing or new standards to meet sustainability performance requirements
- Analyze and understand **mutual recognition** work in/ between other countries and apply it to the Chinese and developing country context



# Expectations & communications

- Focus on food and agricultural sector
- Neutrality of the platform (for continuous communication and discussion between different stakeholders) and paying attention to the roles and needs of developing countries
- Allowing developing countries to have stronger voices
- To use and play by international rules, such as the WTO, ISO and other internationally-recognized systems
- Report on progress (by UNFSS) year on year to note improvements

# Next Steps/ follow-up activities

- China workshop perceived as success
- The wish for an ongoing dialogue and follow-up activities with UNFSS was expressed
- It was suggested to set up a multi-stakeholder platform for policy studies and exchange on VSS
- Hope that different policy studies from different levels can be developed that can bring mutual benefits