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MHP Engages WTO on SPS Barriers and Food Trade Modernisation
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MHP has called for greater transparency and efficiency in international agricultural trade procedures during a high-level meeting with World Trade Organisation (WTO) Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in Geneva.

Mykhailo Bno-Airiian, Vice-President for Global Affairs at MHP, met with WTO leadership alongside representatives of the Federation of Employers of Ukraine to discuss challenges linked to sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regulations and their impact on global agricultural exports.

During the discussions, the Ukrainian delegation presented proposals aimed at improving the transparency, predictability, and efficiency of international SPS procedures. The recommendations focused on facilitating market access for exporters,

streamlining audit and equivalence procedures, and reducing delays that businesses say increasingly function as indirect trade barriers.

According to the participants, lengthy and unpredictable approval timelines for market access applications remain a major challenge for exporters, with some procedures remaining unresolved for years without formal decisions. The issue, they argued, is affecting not only Ukrainian exporters but also broader global food supply chains.

The meeting also addressed the potential for remote and hybrid audit mechanisms, along with the development of international approaches for digital verification and modern compliance tools within global food trade systems.

In addition, representatives from the Ukrainian business community proposed the creation of a regular international dialogue platform involving the WTO, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), governments, and agricultural industry leaders. The initiative would focus on addressing global food security challenges and modernising international trade procedures.

â??Today, regulatory and phytosanitary requirements are an integral part of global trade in food products,â? said Mykhailo Bno-Airiian. â??At the same time, we are increasingly seeing situations where certain regulatory or SPS mechanisms are used not only as a tool for quality or safety control, but also as a means of restricting market access for certain products.â?

He added that the proposed initiative aims to create constructive dialogue between governments and businesses regarding the application of SPS measures and regulatory procedures in international agricultural trade.