

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

INFORMATION MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
AND OPERATION OF THE AGREEMENT

Note by the Secretariat

1. At its meeting of 16-17 October 1984 the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade agreed that an information meeting would be held with the developing country signatories and non-signatories in the Spring of 1985, with the participation of experts from capitals, and that the secretariat would propose an outline which would form the basis for consideration of the matter by the Committee at its next meeting (TBT/M/17, paragraph 48). Set out below is a draft outline together with some suggestions regarding the preparation and conduct of the information meeting.

2. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss ways of improving knowledge of the principles and objectives of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT/M/17, paragraph 45). Therefore, part of the meeting should be devoted to brief presentations of relevant information on which the developing country signatories and non-signatories might wish to raise points of clarification or to make comments. The main subject matters to be dealt with under each item are indicated in brackets. It is suggested that individual delegations or the secretariat could make presentations, as appropriate.

DRAFT OUTLINE

It is suggested that presentations should deal with the following four aspects: content of the relevant provisions of the Agreement; decisions and recommendations of the Committee having a bearing on their implementation; operation of the provisions at the multilateral level; experience of individual countries with the administration of the provisions at the national level.

I. Principles and objectives of the Agreement

- (i) removal of unnecessary obstacles to trade
(relevance to the General Agreement; meaning of "unnecessary")
- (ii) non-discrimination and national treatment
(significance of these concepts in the fields of standardization, testing and certification)
- (iii) promotion of international standardization
(rôle of common standards in removing obstacles to trade)

II. Transparency

- (i) notification, comment and discussion
(purpose, procedures, and action by the Committee regarding national measures to implement the Agreement and preparation and adoption of technical regulations or rules of certification systems)
- (ii) information
(work of enquiry points; information at national level)

III. General provisions

- (i) levels of obligations
(responsibility of Parties for ensuring compliance with the Agreement by local government, private sector and regional bodies)
- (ii) technical assistance
(obligations of Parties and rôle of the Committee)
- (iii) dispute settlement
(special procedures and experience to date)
- (iv) acceptance and accession
(procedures and their application)
- (v) institutions and definitions
(functions of the Committee and explanation of Annex 1)
- (vi) reviews
(purpose and content)

IV. Special provisions relating to developing countries

- (i) information
(rôle of the secretariat)

- (ii) special and differential treatment
(preparation and application of national and international standards, technical assistance, time-limited exceptions from obligations under the Agreement, consultations)