

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

TBT/W/78
20 February 1985
Special Distribution

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE THIRD MEETING ON PROCEDURES FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Note by the Secretariat

1. The secretariat has prepared the following draft agenda and explanatory notes for the Third Meeting on Procedures for Information Exchange pursuant to the request of the Committee at its seventeenth meeting on 16-17 October 1984. In drawing up the items for the draft agenda, the secretariat reviewed the discussion at the Second Meeting on Procedures for Information Exchange held in May 1983 and took into account the views expressed in the Committee since then on the subject of information exchange as well as the proposals made by individual delegations. Some suggestions on procedural arrangements for the meeting are included at the end of the present note.

2. The following items are proposed for the agenda:

- A. Description of activities and facilities of enquiry points;
- B. Publicity on the Agreement and on enquiry points;
- C. Notification procedures:
 - (i) Criteria for assessing the significant effect on trade of other Parties,
 - (ii) Length of time allowed for comments,
 - (iii) Procedures for handling of comments;
- D. Access to information: translation;
- E. Technical assistance;
- F. Information exchange in ISO: the work of INFCO;
- G. Other business.

Item A. Description of Activities and Facilities of Enquiry Points

3. Signatories are invited to describe in writing any developments in the activities of their enquiry points since the Second Meeting held in May 1983. As before any texts provided will be circulated informally to signatories in advance of the meeting. The discussion under this item should be problem-oriented. Delegations will therefore be invited to focus attention on how best to meet the information needs of interested parties under the Agreement.

Item B. Publicity on the Agreement and on Enquiry Points

4. Signatories should provide information on the measures taken by them to give wider publicity to the principles, objectives and operation of the Agreement and to the work of enquiry points. Any brochures prepared for this purpose in accordance with the Committee's recommendation (TBT/16/Rev.2, page 9) could be made available at the meeting.

Item C. Notification Procedures

(i) Criteria for assessing the trade significance of proposed technical regulations

5. The Committee adopted criteria for the application of Article 2.5 (Preamble Part) reproduced in TBT/16/Rev.2, page 7. The purpose of this item is to discuss any problems that may have arisen in implementing these criteria.

(ii) Length of time allowed for comments

6. The purpose of this item is to review the adequacy of the recommended comment period of 60 days in the light of experience with its application.

(iii) Procedures for handling of comments

7. The Committee agreed to place this matter on the agenda of this meeting and to revert to it on the basis of any findings reached (TBT/M/17, para. 20).

8. The discussion should permit the identification of specific problems encountered in this area, and an attempt might be made to resolve any differences of approach in meeting the objectives of the Agreement.

Item D. Access to Information

(i) Translation

9. The Committee, at its meeting of October 1981, agreed on steps to be taken for making available a translation or a translated summary of relevant documentation not available in one of the GATT languages (TBT/M/8, paras 12(3a) and 3(b)). In this connection a point was raised at the Second Meeting on Procedures for Information exchange concerning cooperation programmes on translations of texts of proposed technical regulations and rules of certification systems (TBT/M/13, paras 16 and 17). This meeting provides an opportunity to return to this point and to review the operation of the Committee's 1981 decision.

Item E. Technical Assistance

10. The Committee adopted procedures for exchange of information on technical assistance (Annex 2 of document TBT/M/17). The meeting could discuss any needs and programmes specific to the field of information exchange.

Item F. Information Exchange in ISO: the Work of INFECO

11. Under this item, the observer from the ISO would be asked to make a presentation on the activities of INFECO and the organization of ISONET.

Procedures

(i) Chairmanship and Attendance

12. The Committee may wish to designate the Chairman of the Third Meeting on Information Exchange at its meeting on 26-27 February 1985.

13. As in previous such meetings representatives of interested observers should be invited to participate and to make contributions under any item of the agenda.

(ii) Date and Organization

14. The Committee agreed at its seventeenth meeting that the 1985 meeting on Procedures for Information Exchange will be held in conjunction with its regular meeting scheduled for May-June 1985. It is suggested that the Committee allocate the week of 6 to 10 May 1985 for its next meeting, the second day of which would be reserved for the Meeting on Information Exchange.

15. In accordance with the arrangements made at previous meetings, the meeting will approve the text of any recommendations or conclusions to be forwarded by the Chairman to the Committee. In addition, the Chairman will make an oral report on the meeting to the Committee on his own responsibility.