

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON

TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

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TRANSPARENCY OF THE OPERATION OF CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BODIES

Proposal by Japan

Japan proposed the following elements to be added, for example, after Article 7, paragraph 5.

- 7.* Parties shall ensure that the standard processing period of each certification system is published, and that, in case an application cannot be processed within this period, the reason for delay is notified to the applicant by the central government bodies.

Background

The existing Code requires Parties concerned to make prior notice of their intention to introduce a certification system, and to notify the GATT secretariat of the products to be covered under the system and the objective of the proposed system for the purpose of ensuring transparency in the formulation of the certification system.

However, current provisions do not stipulate any specific requirement with respect to the operation of the systems.

If the standard processing period for approval under a certification system is not made known, it would create difficulties in drawing up an export programme (production programme) or might engender anxiety as well as misunderstanding among the interested Parties owing to the ambiguity in the processing situation.

In view of the above, the Government of Japan considers it appropriate to improve the transparency of the operation of certification systems by introducing the above proposed provision so as to prevent unnecessary obstacles to international trade from occurring.

We consider that the following should not be counted within standard processing period:

- (a) time required for the correction of incomplete applications;
- (b) time required by the applicants in order to prepare themselves for the test;
- (c) time needed by the applicants to answer inquiries.