

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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Special Distribution

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

REGIONAL STANDARDS-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

1. At its meeting of 20-22 October 1981, the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade agreed that the secretariat should transmit a number of agreed questions to regional bodies (TBT/M/8, paragraph 55). Questions to be addressed to such bodies were circulated informally on 15 January and 12 February 1982.

2. The following replies have been received from the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT).

Question: Are the United States and Canada associated with the work of COPANT as observers or in some other capacity?

Reply: The United States through ANSI has been one of the founders of our organization and even if they are not members at this moment they are being kept informed of COPANT's activities. COPANT's relationship with these two countries, at present consists in an active interchange of information; ANSI and Canadian standards are sought very often by manufacturers, importers and exporters.

Question: What are the rights and obligations of associate members?

Reply: The rights and obligations of associate members are explained in the accompanying documents¹. One thousand five hundred standards have already been approved and a further 362 are being studied by COPANT's different Technical Committees composed of Standardization Bodies belonging to all countries of the continent.

¹ The following documents have been received:

"Veinte Anos de Normalizacion Panamericana. Origen y Desarrollo de COPANT"
(Spanish only)

"Granting of Legal Status" (Statutes of COPANT) (English only)

"Directorio de los Miembros de COPANT, 1981" (Spanish only)

These documents are available for consultation in the secretariat, Centre William Rappard, Room 1073.

Question: To what extent does COPANT administer or establish certification systems?

Reply: It is COPANT's purpose to achieve a regional Certification and Seal of Quality and it is working with that aim in mind.

Question: What is COPANT's relationship to ISO? Does COPANT undertake standardization work in an area where an ISO standard already exists or is under discussion? If so, what is its role in this respect?

Reply: COPANT is a regional organization recognized by ISO as a body that has been given the authority by twenty-two South American countries to establish standards applicable to all of them based on voluntary consent. ISO standards are consulted in every case when a COPANT Standard is prepared; when an ISO Standard is found to be relevant to the particular conditions found in South America, COPANT tries as much as possible to adopt it without modifications. Some ISO Standards are prepared and accepted by countries that have a different degree of industrial development and different natural resources; in so far as possible, COPANT tries to harmonize the diverse ideas proposed by its members.