

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

TBT/W/63

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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

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PROJECTED AGENDA FOR THE COMMITTEE

Proposal by the U.S. Delegation

The United States Delegation to the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (the Standards Code Committee) proposes that the Committee provide for an ad hoc session of all interested Parties to be held following each regular Committee meeting for the purpose of discussing and reviewing the agenda for upcoming Committee meetings. Subsequent to this ad hoc session, the GATT Secretariat would issue to the Parties a document entitled "The Technical Barriers to Trade Projected Agenda". This agenda would contain all new and on-going standards topics which had been presented to the Secretariat by Parties for the Committee's consideration in the upcoming year.

Rationale

If adopted, this proposal would facilitate the operation of the Standards Code Committee in four respects:

- By providing an informal forum within which potential and on-going standards issues can be evaluated among Parties and a greater coordination of positions could be achieved;
- By providing the mechanism for a more efficient and servicable agenda;
- By providing a comprehensive and concise one-year agenda to ensure that Parties have complete information on the status of all on-going and proposed Standards Code Committee initiatives; and,
- By encouraging Parties to begin long-term preparations for the next Three-Year Review of the Code.

The Ad Hoc Session

Attendance at the ad hoc session would be voluntary. The session itself would be completely procedural, consisting of informal discussions among national experts regarding issues relevant to the current application of the Standards Code and its

implementation during the following twelve months. The work of the ad hoc sessions would result only in proposals for consideration by all Parties.

Projected Agenda

The "projected agenda" issued to all Parties after the ad hoc session would comprise a twelve-month period (typically three Committee meetings) and would include all proposals advanced to the Secretariat at any time throughout the year (i.e., TBT Committee meetings, ad hoc sessions, or at any other time).

Procedure

After the close of the ad hoc session, a two-week period would be allowed for the Secretariat to receive additional proposals. After such time, the Secretariat would update all on-going proposals for the upcoming twelve-month period, citing the status of each at the close of the Committee meeting, listing any new actions taken by the Committee, and announcing the initiators' projected phase of action. This information would be compiled with all the new proposals received by the Secretariat between the issuance of the last agenda and the date of compilation, and the projected agenda would then be printed as a TBT Document in chart form. Copies of the document would be provided to each delegation within a month of the close of the ad hoc session, allowing Parties sufficient time to study the proposals before the next meeting of the Standards Code Committee.