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## **1 ARTICLE 4**

### **1.1 Text of Article 4**

#### **Article 4**

##### *Institutions*

1. There is hereby established a Committee on Rules of Origin (referred to in this Agreement as "the Committee") composed of the representatives from each of the Members. The Committee shall elect its own Chairman and shall meet as necessary, but not less than once a year, for the purpose of affording Members the opportunity to consult on matters relating to the operation of Parts I, II, III and IV or the furtherance of the objectives set out in these Parts and to carry out such other responsibilities assigned to it under this Agreement or by the Council for Trade in Goods. Where appropriate, the Committee shall request information and advice from the Technical Committee referred to in paragraph 2 on matters related to this Agreement. The Committee may also request such other work from the Technical Committee as it considers appropriate for the furtherance of the above-mentioned objectives of this Agreement. The WTO Secretariat shall act as the secretariat to the Committee.

2. There shall be established a Technical Committee on Rules of Origin (referred to in this Agreement as "the Technical Committee") under the auspices of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) as set out in Annex I. The Technical Committee shall carry out the technical work called for in Part IV and prescribed in Annex I. Where appropriate, the Technical Committee shall request information and advice from the Committee on matters related to this Agreement. The Technical Committee may also request such other work from the Committee as it considers appropriate for the furtherance of the above-mentioned objectives of the Agreement. The CCC Secretariat shall act as the secretariat to the Technical Committee.

### **1.2 Committee on Rules of Origin**

#### **1.2.1 Rules of Procedure**

1. At its meeting on 1 December 1995, the Council for Trade in Goods approved the Rules of procedure for meetings of the Committee on Rules of Origin<sup>1</sup>, consisting of the General Council's Rules of Procedure<sup>2</sup> applied *mutatis mutandis* with agreed modifications.

#### **1.2.2 Observer status**

2. At its meeting on 4 April 1995, the Committee on Rules of Origin agreed that governments granted observer status by the WTO General Council would be allowed to attend meetings of the Committee as observers, without prejudice to the possibility of holding closed sessions without

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<sup>1</sup> [G/C/M/7](#), section 2. The text of the Rules of Procedure can be found in [G/L/149](#).

<sup>2</sup> [WT/L/161](#).

observers.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Representative of the ACP, EFTA, IADB, IMF, ITCB, OECD, UNCTAD, WCO, and the World Bank were invited to attend meetings of the Committee in 200 in an observer capacity.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.2.3 Reporting

3. The Committee on Rules of Origin reports to the Council for Trade in Goods on an annual basis.<sup>5</sup>

4. In addition, the Committee on Rules of Origin reports, also on an annual basis, to the General Council on the implementation of the 2013<sup>6</sup> and the 2015 Ministerial Decision<sup>7</sup> on preferential rules of origin for least-developed countries.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.2.4 Drafting Group on Rules of Origin

5. At its meeting on 27 June 1995, the Committee on Rules of Origin set up a Drafting Group to elaborate a definition of the term "country" for the purposes of the Agreement on Rules of Origin.<sup>9</sup> At its meeting on 16 November 1995, the Committee on Rules of Origin agreed to adopt the following recommendation from the Drafting Group:

"[T]he Committee requests the Technical Committee to fully proceed with its Harmonization Work Programme in the absence of an abstractly constructed definition of the term 'country'; and to forward to it unresolved issues relating to the definition of the term 'country', for a final determination; and

the Committee may request the Drafting Group to address particular issues relating to the definition of the term 'country' and, in that connection, to offer clarification that may enhance the work of the Technical Committee;"<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [G/RO/M/1](#), para. 1

<sup>4</sup> [G/L/413](#), para. 1.

<sup>5</sup> [G/L/36](#) and [Corr.1](#) for 1995; [G/L/119](#) for 1996; [G/L/210](#) for 1997; [G/L/271](#) for 1998; [G/L/326](#) for 1999; [G/L/413](#) for 2000; [G/L/490](#) and [Rev. 1](#) for 2001; [G/L/593](#) and [Add.1](#) for 2002; [G/L/656](#) for 2003; [G/L/704](#) for 2004; [G/L/747](#) for 2005; [G/L/790](#) for 2006; [G/L/831](#) for 2007; [G/L/870](#) for 2008; [G/L/905](#) for 2009; [G/L/939](#) for 2010; [G/L/975](#) for 2011; [G/L/1016](#) for 2012; [G/L/1047](#) for 2013; [G/L/1085](#) for 2014; [G/L/1127](#) for 2015; [G/L/1159](#) for 2016; and [G/L/1188](#) for 2017.

<sup>6</sup> [WT/L/917](#), section C.

<sup>7</sup> [WT/L/917/Add.1](#), section 4

<sup>8</sup> See the general document on the Agreement on Rules of Origin (Practice).

<sup>9</sup> [G/RO/M/2](#), para. 10-16.

<sup>10</sup> [G/RO/M/3](#), paras. 3.1-3.2.