

# **EXPERIENCE SHARING DIALOGUE ON ESTABLISHING OR MAINTAINING A NATIONAL TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE**

8 June 2016

## **REMARKS BY THE CHAIR**

### **Opening remarks**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to our experience sharing session on establishing or maintaining a national trade facilitation committee. Nice to see so many of you joining us. I would like to extend my greetings to the participants of an advanced training course for chairs and experts working on such committees, who have kindly accepted to make presentations and who will play an important role in today's event. A special welcome also goes to the many participants who joined us from capital. It is a great pleasure to have you all here.

Your interest is the reason for holding this event. We have been registering a significant amount of attention on the issue of national TF committees – and demand for related guidance - for a considerable amount of time. What was meant to be a pretty straightforward provision in the Trade Facilitation Agreement - the establishment of a domestic committee to facilitate the coordination and implementation of the Agreement – has turned into an issue that many appear to be approaching in a complex – if not to say: overly complicated - terms.

Article 23.2 seems to give rise to misinterpretations – and, as a result, inaccurate expectations and unfunded concerns. Today, we have an opportunity to discuss the actual obligations arising from the Agreement and the best ways of complying with them. We also want to share experiences and identify best practices, success factors and challenges

related to the establishment of a national TF committee. It is my hope you will leave this session with the assurance that there is no need for an over-engineered, 10-step program to have a well-functioning committee and that you will be able to base yourself on a rich body of tested experiences when carrying out the actually required work. We wanted to offer you the best source for this information, which is why we arranged for a peer-led exchange by people who work directly with their national committees, complemented by expert input. In many ways, the guidance is already there – right in front in you, and often, inside yourselves. Collectively, you bring a rich level of expertise to the table, which I want us to build upon with the help of field-tested experts. We are not here to preach, or to advocate programs and events. Rather, I see a role as a facilitator in the true meaning of the word. By listening to each other and by sharing our experiences, we can all learn from each other, and walk away with a better sense of how to proceed. I will do my best to enable this exchange, and equally count on your support.

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