

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/5407

8 November 1982

Limited Distribution

REPORT (1982) OF THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

1. On 29 October 1982 the following governments had accepted the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade under Article 15.1: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, European Economic Community, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United Kingdom on behalf of Hong Kong, United States and Yugoslavia. Argentina, Egypt, Greece and Rwanda have accepted the Agreement subject to ratification. Tunisia has accepted the Agreement under Article 15.2.
2. The Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade elected Mr. K. Bergholm (Finland), Chairman, and Mr. D. Bondad (Philippines), Vice-Chairman for 1982.
3. Twenty-four contracting parties and four non-contracting parties have observer status. Six international organizations (IMF, UNCTAD, ISO, IEC, FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission and International Office of Epizootics) have attended meetings of the Committee in an observer capacity.
4. The Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade met on three occasions during the third year of operation of the Agreement:
 - 4 March 1982 (TBT/M/9 and L/5299)
 - 26-27 May 1982 (TBT/M/10 and L/5329)
 - 29 October 1982 (TBT/M/11 and L/5406).
5. Signatories of the Agreement have reported regularly to the Committee on measures taken by them to implement and administer the Agreement (TBT/1/Add.1-31). The Committee has examined these reports at each of its meetings.
6. Among the main issues to which the Committee devoted attention are regional standards-related activities, the activities of individual standards-writing and certifying bodies in signatory countries and publicity on enquiry points.
7. The Committee agreed to collect information on regional standardizing bodies and individual standards-writing and certifying bodies in signatory countries with a view to the examination of this information in the light of the provisions of the Agreement (TBT/M/9, TBT/M/10, and TBT/W/42 and Addenda, TBT/W/44 and Addenda).
8. The Committee recommended that information brochures issued by Parties on the facilities provided by their enquiry points should as far as possible contain a common set of elements and follow a similar layout (TBT/M/10, para.23 and TBT/W/41). It also agreed that the issuing of such brochures would be of value (TBT/M/10, para.23).
9. The Committee also instructed the secretariat to collect information on existing international standards and on testing and inspection arrangements relevant to the operation of the Agreement, which could form the basis for a discussion at a future meeting (TBT/M/9, TBT/M/10 and TBT/W/44 and Addenda, TBT/W/45/Rev.1).

10. Informal consultations concerning the request for accession to the Agreement by Bulgaria were held with a view to finding a satisfactory solution of the matter as early as possible. The Committee heard reports from interested delegations on those consultations at its ninth and tenth meetings (TBT/M/9, TBT/M/10)

11. The Committee completed its third annual review of the operation of the Agreement at its 29 October 1982 meeting in accordance with procedures agreed to at its tenth meeting (TBT/M/10, para.25) and on the basis of factual documentation prepared by the secretariat (TBT/10 and Suppl.1).

12. On 29 October 1982, the Committee initiated its first three-year review of the operation and implementation of the Agreement under Article 15.9 of the Agreement, in accordance with procedures agreed to at its ninth meeting (TBT/M/9, para.40 and TBT/W/40).

13. The Committee noted that in general the Agreement had operated satisfactorily. The operation of the Agreement had greatly improved transparency with regard to technical regulations adopted at national level, though some technical problems still remained in connection with the notification procedures and the operation of the enquiry points established under the Agreement, which the Committee was endeavouring to solve on a continuing basis. While a relatively large number of contracting parties had adhered to the Agreement, the Committee expressed the hope that participation would increase in the future, particularly as regards less-developed contracting parties.

14. The Committee considered a number of proposals relating to coverage, interpretation and operating procedures of the Agreement submitted by some signatories (TBT/W/49, TBT/11, TBT/12 and TBT/13).

15. The Committee agreed to arrange for regular meeting of persons responsible for enquiry points on a biennial basis, the next such meeting to take place in the Spring of 1983 in conjunction with a regular meeting of the Committee.

16. The Committee agreed to recommend that Parties to the Agreement effectively provide 45 days for comments on proposed technical regulations and certification systems, and that they look favourably to requests for extension of the time period for comments.

17. The Committee agreed that, upon completion of the first three-year review, the secretariat would issue a document containing the substance of all recommendations and decisions of the Committee on the implementation and interpretation of the Agreement, for use by all those implementing the Agreement and for the information of prospective new signatories of the Agreement.

18. The Committee will complete its first three-year review of the operation and implementation of the Agreement at its next meeting, which will be held on a date to be determined by the Chairman in consultation with delegations.