

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/5905

21 November 1985

Limited Distribution

COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

Meeting of 31 October - 1 November 1985

Note from the Chairman

1. The Committee held its twentieth meeting on 31 October - 1 November 1985, under the Chairmanship of Mr. B.N. Singh (India).
2. The Committee welcomed Portugal as a new signatory to the Agreement. It granted a request by the ITC (UNCTAD/GATT) for attending its meetings in an observer capacity in accordance with the agreed procedures.
3. The Committee took note of information provided by several Parties on various measures taken in their countries to further the implementation of the Agreement. The Committee noted that in spite of the delay in administrative procedures for ratifying the Agreement in the countries of signatories that have signed but not ratified the Agreement, positive steps were being taken by some of these signatories to meet certain requirements of the Agreement. It encouraged these signatories to complete their ratification procedures as soon as possible. Meanwhile, it would pursue its pragmatic approach to the problem of non-ratification unless a situation arose which required addressing the legal aspects of the matter.
4. The Committee noted that a proposal on the exchange of information on translations of documents relating to notifications received general support by Parties to the Agreement who, however, emphasized that no obligation should be taken which went beyond the provisions of Article 10.5. It agreed to revert to a draft recommendation on this point at its next meeting (TBT/M/19, paragraph 36(i)).
5. The Committee adopted a recommendation on the handling of comments on notifications (TBT/W/82) and accordingly invited Parties to notify the secretariat of the authority or agency which they designated to be in charge of handling of comments received.
6. The Committee took note of oral or written submissions by a number of Parties on the procedures followed in their respective countries to determine which draft technical regulations should be notified. In this connection, it will revert to a proposal for furnishing data on the procedures established on the national level in order to gather information on proposed technical regulations.
7. The Committee took note of the documentation prepared by the secretariat describing the activities of international and regional bodies in the field of testing and inspection. (TBT/W/81 and Add.1 and TBT/W/85). It agreed that the Parties should have an in-depth study of the ISO/IEC Guides 25, 36, 38, 39, 40 and 43 setting the general requirements in the area of testing and inspection and circulated in documents TBT/W/84 and TBT/W/84/Add.1 (to be issued shortly) in order to assess if the Committee could recommend their application by Parties in furthering the aims of Article 5 of the Agreement.

8. The Committee held its second three-year review of the operation and implementation of the Agreement under Article 15.9. In this context, it initiated a discussion of the following proposals by one Party: the negotiation of an agreement which would lead to increased acceptance by regulatory authorities in Parties of test data generated in other Parties and maintaining expedited approval procedures; transparency in bilateral agreements between Parties on standards, testing and certification; and ensuring compliance by regional standards bodies with the transparency provisions of the Agreement. It also addressed two ideas submitted by another Party, namely, the possible extension to local government bodies of major obligations under the Agreement and the establishment of a code of good practice for non-governmental standardizing bodies. It agreed to revert to these matters at its next meeting.

9. The Committee carried out the sixth annual review of the implementation and operation of the Agreement under Article 15.8 on the basis of background documentation prepared by the secretariat (TBT/22 and Corr.1, TBT/22/Suppl.1, TBT/W/62/Rev.1 and Corrs. 1 and 2, TBT/W/31/Rev.4 and Corrs. 1 to 6 and TBT/W/25/Rev.10) and adopted its report (1985) to the CONTRACTING PARTIES (L/5890).

10. The Committee agreed to hold its next regular meeting on 6-7 March 1986.