

COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

Meeting of 12-14 October 1987

Note from the Chairman

1. The Committee welcomed Mexico as a new signatory; it noted that following the acceptance of the Agreement ad referendum on 24 July 1987 the Mexican legislative authorities had initiated the ratification procedures.
2. The Committee heard a statement by the observer from the People's Republic of China who informed the Committee that her authorities were studying the feasibility of acceding to the Agreement.
3. The Committee took note of a proposal by the Nordic countries for updating the definitions for terms used in the Agreement (TBT/W/103) and agreed to initiate the discussion on the subject by an examination of the general terms for standardization and certification used in the Agreement, and of the terms and their definitions for the specific purposes of the Agreement contained in Annex 1, in the light of the new and amended definitions in the fifth edition of ISO/IEC Guide 2-1986 "General terms and their definitions concerning standardisation and related activities".
4. With regard to the relationship of its work to the negotiations in the Uruguay Round, the Committee noted the view that because negotiations on standards-related issues would be conducted mainly at a technical level in discussions in the NG8, the advice and assistance of the Committee on matters within its competence would be essential. It therefore agreed that individual Parties should provide further clarification on the issues they have identified in MTN/GNG.NG8/W/13 and that the Committee should begin a detailed consideration of these issues. The Committee also noted the view that Parties to the Agreement maintained the right to take action under Article 15, paragraphs 9 and 10.
5. The Committee took note of an oral report presented by the Chairman of the fourth meeting of Procedures for Information Exchange held on 13 October 1987. It also adopted (a) a decision on the provision of data on the number of enquiries received and answered by enquiry points under sub-paragraph(s) of Article 10.1 and 10.2 of the Agreement, and (b) a decision relating to the acknowledgement of the receipt of enquiries. In connection with the notification procedures, the Committee agreed to amend its previous recommendation on the meaning of "significant effect on trade" in Article 2.5 to include any significant import-enhancing effects of a regulation on trade of other Parties. The Committee also took certain procedural steps to improve the implementation of its recommendation on the comment period of sixty days.

6. The Committee held its eight annual review of the implementation and operation of the Agreement on the basis of a background note by the secretariat (TBT/28). On this occasion, one Party noted that the discrepancy in the number of notifications by individual Parties gave rise to an imbalance of rights and obligations under the Agreement. The Committee heard a statement summarizing the standards-related provisions of the Free-Trade Area Agreement concluded between Canada and the United States.

7. The Committee adopted the 1987 Report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES (L/6240).

8. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 5 February 1988.