

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Group of Negotiations on Goods (GATT)
Negotiating Group on Agriculture

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE UNITED STATES ON A HEALTH
AND SANITARY WORKING GROUP

The working group will assist the Negotiating Group on Agriculture achieve its agreed long-term negotiating objectives by pursuing the work agenda described below. The work agenda seeks to:

- (1) strengthen GATT rules;
- (2) establish an early consultative mechanism; and
- (3) encourage greater use of appropriate international standards and develop closer links with international standards organizations.

The final product of the working group should be a report and recommendations on assigned issues to the Agriculture Group, including proposals for incorporating new obligations into the GATT as Uruguay Round commitments and other questions agreed to by the Agriculture Group. A progress report on its work should be submitted at each Agriculture Negotiating Group meeting.

THE PROPOSED WORK AGENDA

Strengthen GATT rules on health and sanitary measures

The working group should examine existing GATT Article XX(b) rules and disciplines and propose amendments, modifications, or revisions to the GATT that would:

- (1) require that all health and sanitary measures be based on sound and verifiable scientific evidence;
- (2) give greater recognition to the principle of equivalency of standards;
- (3) provide that national regulations that fully comply with international standards are in conformity with Article XX(b).

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Improve GATT procedures on health and sanitary measures

The working group should recommend means of establishing an early consultative mechanism on regulatory changes having a high potential for disrupting trade, including time-periods required for prior notification and consultations before enactment, and criteria for determining when regulations may have a high potential for disrupting trade.

The working party should review existing GATT notification requirements and procedures to determine which are appropriate for notification of health and sanitary measures under Article XX(b) (e.g. the Tokyo Round Framework Agreements). The working party may wish to provide any additional ideas on increasing transparency.

Harmonization of health and sanitary measures

The working party should provide recommendations for establishing harmonization of health and sanitary measures as a general principle of trade within the context of Article XX(b).

The working party should provide recommendations for encouraging countries to participate in international standards organizations with a view toward basing domestic regulations on international standards.

Improve GATT linkages to international standards organizations

The working party should propose improvements to channels of communications between working level officials occupied with GATT matters and officials working on international standards.

The working party should provide recommendations on establishing formal procedural arrangements whereby international standards organizations may be requested to provide technical advice on health and sanitary trade issues to appropriate GATT bodies.

The working party should review GATT Article XXIII with the view toward developing dispute settlement procedures that would be appropriate in combining a legal GATT-like discipline with technical expertise of international standards organizations.