

REPORT (1999) OF THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

1. The Committee held its sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth meetings on 31 March, 11 June and 1 October (G/TBT/M/15-17) respectively, and Mr. Mohan Kumar (India) was Chairman. At those meetings, the Committee heard statements on the implementation and administration of the Agreement. A number of Members informed the Committee of measures taken to ensure the implementation and administration of the Agreement. Several measures were brought to the attention of the Committee by Members who raised concerns about the potential adverse trade effects or inconsistency with the Agreement of those measures. The Committee also held discussions concerning trade facilitation.
2. At its sixteenth meeting, the Committee carried out its Fourth Annual Review of the Implementation and Operation of the Agreement under Article 15.3 based on background documentation contained in G/TBT/7, and its Fourth Annual Review of the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards in Annex 3 based on background documentation contained in WTO TBT Standards Code Directory, G/TBT/CS/1/Add.3 and G/TBT/CS/2/Rev.5. Concerns were raised with respect to the implementation of the transparency provisions under the Agreement. In relation to that, the Committee adopted a number of decisions and recommendations to speed up the procedures for notifications and information exchange through means of electronic dissemination (G/TBT/1/Rev.6).
3. The Committee continued its programme of work arising from the First Triennial Review of the Operation and Implementation of the Agreement under Article 15.4 (G/TBT/5), and additional submissions were contributed by Members to enrich the discussions. The following elements were discussed: (i) implementation and administration of the Agreement; (ii) operation and implementation of the notification procedures; (iii) acceptance, implementation and operation of the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards; (iv) international standards, guides and recommendations; (v) preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations; (vi) conformity assessment procedures; (vii) technical assistance; (viii) special and differential treatment; and (ix) other elements.
4. With a view to carrying out the Work Programme on matters related to conformity assessment procedures, a WTO Symposium on Conformity Assessment Procedures was held on 8-9 June to deepen Members' understanding on a number of issues. These included: (i) relevant international guides and recommendations for conformity assessment; (ii) types of conformity assessment procedures and the conditions for their application; (iii) various approaches for the recognition of the results of conformity assessment procedures; and (iv) the role of international and regional systems for conformity assessment. Experts from business, testing laboratory, inspection, certification, accreditation, metrology and standardizing bodies, as well as regional and international systems were invited as speakers and panelists. Factual non-binding summary reports of the Symposium and its Sessions were prepared by the Chairman and the rapporteurs under their own responsibilities.

5. Representatives of the ACP, ALADI, EFTA, FAO, IEC, IMF, ISO, ITC, OECD, OIE, OIML, UNCTAD, UN/ECE, UNIDO, WHO, WHO/FAO Codex Alimentarius Commission and the World Bank attended meetings of the Committee in an observer capacity.
