



30 October 2023

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**Council for Trade in Goods  
Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures**

**REPORT TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS  
ON IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF  
THE COMMITTEE ON SUBSIDIES AND COUNTERVAILING MEASURES**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1. This report is being prepared at the request<sup>1</sup> of the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG). All CTG subsidiary bodies were asked to produce written reports summarizing their discussions and describing the improvements they had agreed on. On 30 June 2023, the CTG Chair held a meeting with the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies at which all Chairs were requested to submit their reports no later than in the first week of November 2023, and to ensure that all improvements made since the conclusion of MC12 were appropriately reflected in those reports.

1.2. Reference is made to document [G/L/1449 – G/SCM/162](#) containing the report submitted by the Chair of the Committee on 28 November 2022 - under the Chair's own responsibility - to the CTG on the functioning of the Committee. The report reflected the concrete actions adopted by the Committee over the past years to improve its work, provided an overview of the reforms that had already been introduced and where the Committee stood at the time with respect to past actions and discussions. Based on what was contained in this report and in all other subsidiary bodies' Chairs reports, the CTG Secretariat circulated on 11 January 2023 a "Comparison Matrix" contained in document [G/C/W/824](#) providing a general overview of the main elements that seemed to be comparable across the reports. A revised version of the said Matrix was circulated in document [G/C/W/824/Rev.1](#).

1.3. The discussions on the reform of the functioning of the Committee started under other business in the regular autumn meeting of the Committee in October 2022<sup>2</sup>. At that meeting, the Chair of the Committee remarked on the then-ongoing consultations at the level of the General Council and the CTG regarding WTO reform, indicated that all subsidiary bodies were tasked to see what has been done in their respective areas and explore ways to improve their daily functioning and better deliver on their respective mandates. The Chair of the Committee also referred to the consultations held by the Chair of the CTG with delegations and with the Chairs of the CTG's subsidiary bodies and the request by the CTG Chair to all those Chairs to submit – under their own responsibility – reports on the current functioning of their different Committees.

1.4. It should be noted that this report covers all the improvements introduced in the Committee since the conclusion of MC12 in June 2022 following the extensive discussions by Members and with a view to better respond to its mandate and its terms of reference.

**2 PROCESS AND PROPOSALS**

2.1. The following summarizes the key procedural aspects and proposals considered:

- a. The discussions were conducted in an informal mode at the regular spring Committee meeting in May 2023<sup>3</sup>, and at the joint informal meetings of the Committees on

<sup>1</sup> [JOB/CTG/29](#) and [JOB/CTG/33](#).

<sup>2</sup> [G/SCM/M/121](#).

<sup>3</sup> [G/SCM/M/123](#).

Anti-Dumping Practices, Safeguards and Subsidies and Countervailing Measures ("the three Committees") held on 20 June and 2 October 2023.

- b. The Secretariat was instructed by the Committee to explore four specific issues and report back to the Committee, while three additional issues remained under Members' consideration. A list of all seven issues was circulated in document [RD/SCM/62](#) following the regular spring Committee meeting in May 2023 and was the basis for the discussion conducted in the joint informal meeting of the three Committees held on 20 June 2023.
- c. The discussions at the joint informal meeting of the three Committees held on 20 June 2023 have resulted in the approval, through a written procedure, of four reform steps. A document describing these agreed reforms was circulated in [G/ADP/32 - G/SCM/165 - G/SG/284](#).
- d. One additional issue remained under the consideration of the three Committees and was circulated in document [RD/ADP/37 - RD/SG/67 - RD/SCM/64](#). This remaining issue was further discussed at the joint informal meeting of the three Committees held on 2 October 2023 ([RD/ADP/39 - RD/SG/69 - G/SCM/67](#)). The discussions at that meeting have resulted in the approval, through a written procedure, of this remaining issue. A document reflecting this agreed step was circulated in [G/ADP/33 - G/SCM/166 - G/SG/285](#).
- e. Furthermore, a proposal circulated in document [RD/SCM/63](#)<sup>4</sup>, which pertains to the formation of an informal technical discussion group on items under the SCM Agreement, was presented for consideration. This proposal was discussed at the informal meeting of the SCM Committee held on 2 October 2023 in conjunction with the joint informal meeting of the three Committees, referred above. As agreed at that informal meeting, the proposal was placed on the agenda of the regular meeting of the Committee held on 27 October 2023 for further discussion.

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<sup>4</sup> The latest version of the document can be found in [RD/SCM/63/Rev.2](#). (Revisions 1 and 2 are additions of co-sponsors.)

### **3 IMPROVEMENTS ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEE**

3.1. As a result of these discussions, the Committee agreed to implement **five** changes with a view to improving its functioning, including where the Secretariat was requested to introduce changes to the way in which it supports the work of the Committee.

3.2. The improvements approved by the Committee are as follows:

<b>General area</b>	<b>Improvements in the functioning of the Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures</b>
<b>[A. Assistance to delegates]</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training sessions on the functioning of the Committees will be held twice a year, the first of which to be held in September 2023 [moved to October for logistical reasons]. The presentations made and the audio recording of those sessions will be made available on the relevant WTO webpages for Members to consult.</li> </ul>
<b>[B. Planning and organization of meetings]</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The meeting weeks of the regular and special formal spring and autumn meetings of the Committees for the following year shall be proposed in the annotated draft agendas of the October meetings.</li> <li>The use of the following features of the e-Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) uploading Members' statements and</li> <li>(ii) facilitating access to relevant documents for meetings</li> </ul> The use of such features is to be made available on a trial-basis starting in the Spring Rules Committees of 2024 until Spring Rules Committees of 2025. This will be reviewed at the Rules Committees' meetings of Spring 2025 to decide whether to extend the trial period or to continue using, on a permanent basis, these features or any other features of the e-Agenda agreed upon. </li> </ul>
<b>[C. Reporting of formal meetings]</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes should be provided, in the current reported style, as soon as feasible after the meetings without compromising on the quality of the minutes produced. The Minutes, once finalized, will be circulated to the membership even before the deadlines for written answers to written questions have passed. If these answers to questions are submitted within the deadlines, after the circulation of the Minutes, an addendum to the Minutes will be issued. In order to facilitate this process, Members are encouraged to provide their written statements to the Secretariat after the meetings without delay. The Secretariat may continue to explore artificial intelligence tools to produce minutes as better ones become available.</li> <li>The current summary of the formal meetings, produced in the form of a News item as approved by the Chairs of the Committees, would continue to be produced by the Secretariat.</li> </ul>

### **4 PENDING ISSUES AND NEXT STEPS**

4.1. At the informal meeting of the Committee held on 2 October 2023, it was agreed to place the proposal circulated in document [RD/SCM/63](#), on the agenda of the regular meeting of the Committee as of 27 October 2023 for further discussion. More discussion took place on this proposal at the regular meeting of 27 October 2023. While there were several Members expressing support for the proposal, there were also others who have raised some questions and concerns. Following the discussions, the Chair noted that Members would need more time to discuss this proposal.