

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

G/L/421
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COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS

Chairman's factual progress report to the General Council on the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce

1. Following the General Council decision on 17 July 2000 "to invite the four subsidiary bodies, i.e. the Goods, Services and TRIPS Councils and the Committee on Trade and Development, to pick up where they left off in their work on electronic commerce within their respective spheres of competence, identify cross-sectoral issues, and report back to the General Council at its regular meeting in December this year," the Council for Trade in Goods discussed electronic commerce issues under its purview during two informal meetings, on 4 October and 8 November 2000.
2. Upon request by delegations, the Secretariat updated its background note on work carried out by other intergovernmental organizations on subjects that relate to the work programme of the CTG (document G/C/W/128/Add.1). The update provides a broad overview of work by the OECD, UNCITRAL, UNCTAD, the World Bank, and the WCO on issues related to those under examination in the CTG.

3. Members reaffirmed the continuing relevance of the earlier contribution of the Council for Trade in Goods to the General Council which was submitted by the Chairman of the CTG in July 1999 (document G/C/W/158). According to the mandate contained in document WT/L/274 (Work Programme on Electronic Commerce), that contribution provides an overview on the discussion of the following issues:

- market access for and access to products related to electronic commerce;
- valuation issues arising from the application of the Agreement on Implementation of Article VII of the GATT 1994;
- issues arising from the application of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures;
- customs duties and other duties and charges as defined under Article II of GATT 1994;
- standards in relation to electronic commerce;
- rules of origin issues;
- classification issues.

4. Some Members recalled that the General Council had invited the subsidiary bodies to identify cross-sectoral issues, and indicated that the earlier contribution of the Council for Trade in Goods had in particular identified the issue of classification of the content of certain electronic transmissions.

5. The Council for Trade in Goods stands ready to continue its work on any of the issues within its spheres of competence in light of the discussions in the General Council.
