

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

G/L/803
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REPORT (2006) OF THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

1. The Committee held its thirty-ninth to forty-first regular meetings on 15 and 17 March, 7-9 June and 9 November 2006 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Margers Krams (Latvia).¹

2. At each of the meetings in 2006, the Committee heard statements by a number of Members informing the Committee of measures taken to ensure the implementation and administration of the Agreement. Several new specific trade concerns were brought to the attention of the Committee with regard to their potential adverse trade effects, or inconsistency with the Agreement, and the Committee heard exchanges on trade concerns that had been previously raised.

3. During the reporting period, the Committee continued to discuss issues arising from the Third Triennial Review of the Operation and Implementation of the Agreement under Article 15.4 (G/TBT/13). With a view to improving Members' implementation of Articles 5-9 of the Agreement and promoting a better understanding of Members' conformity assessment systems, the Third Triennial Review set out a Work Programme² to address a number of issues, among others, different approaches to conformity assessment, including the acceptance of conformity assessment results.³ Pursuant to this Work Programme, the TBT Committee held a Workshop on the Different Approaches to Conformity Assessment on 16-17 March 2006.⁴

4. The TBT Committee conducted the Fourth Triennial Review following the Work Programme of November 2004 and based on the various submissions by Members.⁵ The Review addressed: Implementation and Administration of the Agreement; Good Regulatory Practice; Conformity Assessment Procedures; Transparency; Technical Assistance; and Special and Differential Treatment. The Committee concluded the Review at its 9 November 2006 meeting.⁶

5. The Committee carried out, at its meeting of 15 and 17 March 2006, the Eleventh Annual Review of the Implementation and Operation of the TBT Agreement (G/TBT/18) and the Eleventh Annual Review of the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards. This work was based on the following background documents: a list of standardizing bodies that have accepted the Code in 2005 (G/TBT/CS/1/Add.10), a list of standardizing bodies that have accepted the Code since 1 January 1995 (G/TBT/CS/2/Rev.12) and the Eleventh edition of the WTO TBT Standards Code Directory prepared by the ISO/IEC Information Centre.

¹ G/TBT/M/38-40.

² G/TBT/13, paragraph 40.

³ The Third Triennial Review instructs the Committee to "take stock of the progress made on this Work Programme and reflect it in its Annual Report to the Council for Trade in Goods" (G/TBT/13, paragraph 41).

⁴ A Report of the workshop is contained in G/TBT/M/38/Add.1.

⁵ G/TBT/M/35, Annex 3.

⁶ The Report of the Fourth Triennial Review of the Operation and Implementation of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade under Article 15.4 is contained in document G/TBT/19.

6. The Committee carried out, at its meeting of 9 November 2006, the Fifth Annual Transitional Review mandated in the Protocol of Accession of the People's Republic of China.⁷

7. During the regular meetings of the TBT Committee held in 2006, representatives of the Codex, IEC, ISO, ITC, OECD, OIML, UNCTAD and UNIDO updated the Committee on the activities relevant to the work of the TBT Committee, including on technical assistance.

⁷ The Report of the Committee's Fifth Annual Transitional Review is contained in document G/TBT/20.