

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

G/L/973
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(11-5482)

REPORT (2011) OF THE COMMITTEE OF PARTICIPANTS ON THE EXPANSION OF TRADE IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS

1. The Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products, hereinafter referred to as "the Committee", was established pursuant to the provisions of the Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products (WT/MIN(96)/16), hereinafter referred to as "the Ministerial Declaration", and the provisions for the Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products (G/L/160), in order to carry out the provisions of paragraphs 3, 5, 6 and 7 of the Annex to the Declaration.

2. The Committee has held two formal meetings in 2011: i.e. on 24 May and 24 October. The minutes of these meetings are contained in documents G/IT/M/53 and G/IT/M/54. Mr Zahari MD ALI (Malaysia) was elected Chairman of the Committee for 2011.

3. The total number of participants to the Ministerial Declaration is seventy-three (73). At the Committee meeting of 24 October 2011, the Russian Federation stated its intention of joining the ITA, and indicated that in the coming weeks, it would send a formal letter of request to the Chairman of the Committee and subsequently, submit Russia's ITA schedule of commitments to the Participants for verification. The Committee's rules of procedure provide for observer status in the Committee for WTO Members which are not participants to the Ministerial Declaration and governments that are observers to the Council for Trade in Goods. Requests for observer status by international intergovernmental organizations are considered on a case-by-case basis. The International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have been granted observer status; and the World Customs Organization (WCO) has been granted observer status to meetings where the issues of HS classification and HS amendments are included in the agenda.

4. The Committee continued its deliberations on the Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) Work Programme. With regard to its work on the EMC/EMI Pilot Project, the Committee took note that among the 46 participants, 24 of them have provided their survey responses and encouraged those who had not provided the information to do so without any further delay. In considering ways to advance and expand its work on NTMs other than EMC/EMI, the Committee also heard reports and updates by participants on their contributions to the work on NTMs, including those in other WTO bodies, e.g., in the NGMA.

5. The Committee further continued its work on classification divergences. At the meetings of 24 May and 24 October 2011, the Committee considered the draft decision proposed by the Chairman for the endorsement of List I - A items (G/IT/W/34). The Chairman decided that he would hold consultations with Participants on the draft decision before the next meeting of the Committee.

6. At the meeting of 24 May 2011, the Committee had updates from the European Union, proponent of the proposal (G/IT/W/28) concerning the review of ITA. At the meeting of 24 October 2011, the Committee heard answers from the European Union (JOB/IT/5) to the questions raised by

ASEAN ITA Participants with regard to the proposal. ASEAN ITA Participants acknowledged the European Union answers and provided its preliminary reactions.

7. The Committee has consistently reviewed the status of implementation, a summary of which is provided in document G/IT/1 and its revisions. The document noted that most participants had submitted the formal documentation for rectification and modification of their WTO schedules in order to incorporate the commitments arising from the Ministerial Declaration and most had been certified by the Director General. One participant still had not yet submitted the necessary documentation.

8. At the meeting of 24 May 2011, the Committee discussed the suggestion regarding the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the ITA. At the meeting of 24 October 2011, the Committee agreed to organize a symposium during the second quarter of 2012 to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the ITA.

9. The Chairman regularly informed the Committee under "Other Business" that participants continued to consult among themselves on review of product coverage. He encouraged delegations to continue their efforts.
