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Council for Trade in Goods

**IMPROVING THE FUNCTIONING OF THE
COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS**

REFORM MEASURES ADOPTED ON A TRIAL BASIS AT
THE FORMAL MEETING OF 30 NOVEMBER 2023

1 INFORMATION REGARDING INFORMAL MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS

1.1. We request that the Chairperson for the Council for Trade in Goods routinely circulate an Overview Report after a CTG informal meeting, under their own authority.

1.2. The aim of such a Report would be to help improve transparency and foster greater inclusion for Delegations that cannot attend the informal meetings due to myriad reasons (including, but not limited to, competing meetings and/or capacity constraints as referenced by submissions including [JOB/GC/223/Rev.1](#) and [JOB/CTG/21/Rev.1](#)).

1.3. Such a document shall be compiled and circulated on the basis of the following principles:

- (i) It should be circulated as soon as possible and preferably within two working days of the informal meeting;
- (ii) it shall provide a factual and neutral overview of the main elements discussed by Members, and be linked to the agenda of the meeting as circulated in the Informal Convening Notice;
- (iii) as a reminder it should capture, if applicable, next steps as referenced at the meeting, including Chair consultations, the dates of the next formal and/or informal meetings, etc. which should continue to be convened and communicated formally as according to current practice;
- (iv) it shall not indicate the names of any Member, or contain information to make Members identifiable;
- (v) this record of the meeting shall not include the opinions of the Chairperson, beyond those expressed by the Chairperson within the meeting itself; and
- (vi) nothing in this document precludes the Chair from circulating a further separate Communication under their own responsibility. Such Communications may include but not be limited to Chairs' texts, further detail on next steps, and/or other documents as requested by Members.

1.4. We welcome that the CTG already uploads all Convening Notices to the Interactive Meetings Calendar. For transparency, we request that the Overview Reports of informal meetings are also, immediately upon circulation, uploaded to the relevant page of the Interactive Meetings Calendar.

2 CHAIR'S FOLLOW-UP NOTE ON ACTIONS FOLLOWING FORMAL MEETINGS

2.1. The Council supports the creation of a new "follow-up" document, under the authority of the Chairperson, concisely collating agreed next steps, deadlines, and actions to be taken by delegations in preparation for the next formal meeting.

2.2. This document should be issued as soon as possible and preferably within five working days of the formal meeting and, to the extent possible, in all WTO official languages simultaneously. The Chair may also circulate a courtesy copy of this document to delegates when it is available, and it will be uploaded to the WTO Documents Online Database.

2.3. With reference to the relevant excellent existing digital eTools and information sources available for the CTG, the information covered by this document could include:

- (i) A hyperlink to the [eAgenda](#), where the Chair's concluding remarks for each item should be collated and accessible;
- (ii) the dates of the Council's subsequent meetings, as already reflected in the broader [WTO Calendar](#), the [CTG Information Hub](#), and the Council's tentative [calendar of meetings](#);
- (iii) a hyperlink to the [existing guidance](#) on how to add items to the agenda of the following formal meeting;
- (iv) the date on which the agenda for the next formal meeting will close;
- (v) an indicative date by which the convening notice for the next formal meeting will be circulated;
- (vi) an indicative date by which the annotated agenda for the next formal meeting will be circulated;
- (vii) as appropriate, a reminder of any items that the Council has agreed to continue to discuss, and/or any upcoming standing items, such as the Annual Report;
- (viii) as appropriate, any other information – including on deadlines or processes – that the Chair considers would assist Members to interact with the Council; and
- (ix) noting nothing in this document limits the ability of the Chair or the Secretariat to circulate any Communications or reminders, on an *ad hoc* basis, in furtherance of their interactions with Members.

3 CTG INFORMATION HUB

3.1. The Council warmly welcomes the updates to the [CTG page](#) of the WTO website. These updates have transformed the page into a central hub of practical information for delegates. As such, the CTG Hub represents best practice in terms of user-friendly access to consolidated information, and we encourage other bodies to draw inspiration from its format as appropriate.

3.2. To ensure all information is collated, updated and easily accessible, key dates and information shall be prominently included in the CTG Hub:

- (i) A "previous meeting" box shall contain a hyperlink to both the Follow-Up Note (which, as above, would collate a range of key information) and the Minutes of the previous meeting when available;
- (ii) a "forthcoming meeting" box shall contain a link to the relevant portal of the Interactive Meetings Calendar, the date on which the agenda will close, a link to the eAgenda, any other information and deadlines of which the Chair/Secretariat consider that Members ought to be aware; and
- (iii) hyperlinks to all documents for the forthcoming meetings, when available, within the Hub.

3.3. To ensure integration of digital tools and improve the visibility of this excellent eTool, the CTG Hub should be prominently accessible on all CTG portals on the Interactive Meetings Calendar.

4 CONVENING NOTICES

4.1. We welcome that the Council for Trade in Goods already demonstrates best practice on Convening Notices, including through the hyperlinking of all WTO documents referenced within, and the upload to the Interactive Meetings Calendar.

4.2. This document is already circulated as a second "Airgram" 15 days before the formal meeting, after the agenda has closed.

4.3. References to "Airgram" should be replaced by references to "Convening Notice".

4.4. We welcome that the CTG already circulates key documents by email distribution based on the eRegistration system. Furthermore, we thank the Secretariat for the pragmatic updates to the eDelegates system, as communicated to Members, which will enable Delegation Coordinators to include capital-based delegates, as appropriate. As such, we encourage the CTG to continue to use this digital system of distribution lists as soon as the new eDelegate system goes live, and would propose that key documents (including this document) should be circulated exclusively based on that system.

4.5. In addition to the minimum requirement laid out in the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the General Council ([WT/L/161](#)), which apply *mutatis mutandis* to the CTG, the convening notice should provide information on:

- Logistical arrangements:
 - o Date and time;
 - o venue (room when available);
 - o type of participation (in-person only, hybrid or online);
 - o registration information; and
 - o contact details for the meetings.
- Conduct of the meeting, including hyperlinks to:
 - o The Documents Online page with all relevant documents for the meeting;
 - o any separate documents with the proposed agenda (if applicable);
 - o annotated agenda, if available;
 - o rules of procedure; and
 - o any other relevant information.
- Proposed agenda:
 - o A list of the items proposed for the agenda with hyperlinks to all the relevant documents, as applicable.

4.6. For consistency, including access to previous iterations, the Convening Notice should continue to be issued under the existing document series (WTO/AIR/CTG).

4.7. For accessibility, the document font and formatting should be aligned with the other WTO documents.
