



6 December 2022

(22-9062)

Page: 1/10

Council for Trade in Goods

REPORT ON THE CURRENT FUNCTIONING OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS

REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CTG

The following report is being submitted by the Chairperson of the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG, or the Council), Mr Etienne OUDOT DE DAINVILLE, under his own responsibility. The report was prepared with the assistance of the Secretariat and follows the same approach as the reports that were requested from the Chairpersons of the CTG's 14 subsidiary bodies.¹

1 PAST EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE WORK OF THE CTG

1.1. In 2009, the Chairperson of the General Council requested all relevant WTO bodies to discuss ways and means to improve the timeliness and completeness of notifications and other information flows. While discussions took place in the context of many subsidiary bodies, the CTG itself did not hold consultations on these issues; indeed, there were no discussions of this nature until 2018. For this reason, this section describes, in general terms, the relevant issues and proposals discussed at the CTG since 2018.

1.2. At the CTG's formal meeting of 12-13 November 2018, the Chairperson of the CTG invited delegations to reflect on how best to improve the work of the Goods Council to make it more efficient, in particular with regard to specific trade concerns (STCs).² Under a separate agenda item, the Council also began discussing a proposal entitled "Procedures to Enhance Transparency and Strengthen Notification Requirements Under WTO Agreements", which had been submitted to both the CTG and the General Council.³ Proponents noted that the proposal had been inspired on the Secretariat's Annual Report on Notifications provided to the CTG in document [G/L/223](#) and its revisions, which demonstrated Members' lack of compliance with the notification requirements of the various WTO Agreements.

1.3. In an informal meeting of the CTG that took place on 4 March 2019, Members identified a series of challenges when dealing with trade concerns at the CTG and proposed possible solutions to them.⁴ At that meeting, the delegation of Hong Kong, China circulated a room document detailing its ideas on how to improve different aspects of the functioning of the CTG and its subsidiary bodies.⁵ In addition, the delegations of Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Chinese Taipei, and the United States made a presentation and circulated a room document further elaborating on their proposal for procedures to enhance transparency and strengthen notification requirements under the various WTO Agreements.⁶ This proposal continued being discussed both at the General Council and the CTG until relatively recently, when the discussions moved completely to the former.

¹ See document [JOB/CTG/18](#).

² See document [G/C/M/133](#), paragraph 38.2.

³ See document [JOB/CTG/14](#) and its revisions. The proposal was initially co-sponsored by Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Chinese Taipei, and the United States.

⁴ For a summary, see document [G/C/M/134](#), paragraph 32.1.

⁵ See document [RD/CTG/6](#).

⁶ See document [RD/CTG/7](#).

1.4. At the CTG's formal meeting of 11-12 April 2019, the delegation of Hong Kong, China requested to continue discussing the functioning of the CTG and its subsidiary bodies. In their view, it was necessary to establish a framework for the Council to work together with its subsidiary bodies in an effective, coherent, and results-oriented manner, which was pertinent to ensuring the WTO's continued evolution and relevance in a fast-evolving trading environment, which required to constantly adjust the procedures. Sixteen other delegations took the floor to support additional work in this area.⁷

1.5. Members continued addressing these ideas in a dedicated informal meeting that took place on 18 June 2019. At this meeting, the delegation of Singapore circulated a room document entitled "Strengthening the WTO's Deliberative Function: Good Practices in the TBT Committee"⁸, to reflect upon which of these practices by the TBT Committee could eventually be implemented in other CTG subsidiary bodies.

1.6. At the CTG's formal meetings of 8-9 July ⁹ and 14 November 2019¹⁰, the Council continued discussing the issue under a dedicated agenda item that had been requested by the delegation of Hong Kong, China. Hong Kong, China had also clarified that this was not a proposal, but rather a collection of ideas from Members having an interest in exploring the potential for improvement under the existing framework. Updated versions of these room documents were circulated in July¹¹ and November 2019¹², respectively. The last version of this document included proposals to introduce an annotated agenda and an annual plan of meetings for the CTG and its subsidiary bodies. At these meetings, Members also continued considering the room documents that had been submitted by Singapore. Some Members also noted that the CTG's Airgrams were being circulated only a few days prior to a meeting, which made it difficult to prepare; for this reason, they requested that a draft Airgram be circulated at least one month before the meeting, which would not require modifying the rules of procedure.

1.7. At the July 2019 formal meeting, the European Union announced that it had been working with ten other delegations on a proposal for guidelines applicable to WTO bodies dealing with trade concerns, such as the CTG and most of its subsidiary bodies. This proposal sought to improve the way in which Members prepared for and organized meetings in general, as well as guidelines on how to consider trade concerns more effectively. Although this proposal was submitted and discussed at the General Council, it continued to be referred to at the CTG.¹³

1.8. At the same meeting, the delegations of Cuba, India, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe submitted a proposal entitled "An Inclusive Approach to Transparency and Notification Requirements in the WTO", which had been circulated to the General Council, the CTG, the Council for Trade in Services, the TRIPS Council, the Committee on Trade and Development, and the Committee on Agriculture.¹⁴ While acknowledging the importance of compliance with obligations, these delegations considered that it was necessary to recognize that developing countries faced challenges in meeting their transparency obligations due to their limited capacities and resources.

1.9. Discussions continued at an informal meeting that took place on 5 February 2020. At the formal meeting of 10 June 2020, the Chairperson noted that the following issues had been informally discussed: (i) creating a plan for annual meetings; (ii) preparing a CTG annotated agenda; (iii) the sending of meeting reminders at least one month in advance of those meetings; (iv) circulating the statements made in meetings; (v) creating a contacts list; (vi) creating a general email for the Council and for each Committee; and (vii) organizing introductory sessions for new delegates. He also noted that, while some of these suggestions had been accepted, on others there had been no consensus, including with regard to the annotated agenda and the circulation of statements made during Council meetings.¹⁵ He also noted that a tentative 2020 year plan had been established, but

⁷ Agenda Item 32, "Better Functioning of the Council for Trade in Goods and Subsidiary Committees", document [G/C/M/134](#), paragraphs 32.1-32.20.

⁸ See document [RD/CTG/8](#).

⁹ See document [G/C/M/135](#), Agenda Item 34.

¹⁰ See document [G/C/M/136](#), Agenda Item 34.

¹¹ See document [RD/CTG/9](#).

¹² See document [RD/CTG/10](#).

¹³ Document [WT/GC/W/777](#) and its revisions.

¹⁴ Document [JOB/CTG/15](#) and its revisions.

¹⁵ See document [G/C/M/137](#), Agenda Item 37.

that all meetings had been suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions continued at the CTG's formal meeting of 25-26 November 2020¹⁶, but no progress had been made since then.

1.10. Since no additional proposals were submitted and no Member had requested to continue discussing these issues, the Council had not held further discussions on how to improve the work of the CTG and its subsidiary bodies. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, as a result of these discussions, some changes have been introduced in the work of the CTG, including the manner in which the Airgram is prepared, and the regular preparation of a "tentative annual plan of meetings" for the CTG and its subsidiary bodies, which is now regularly updated and circulated at each formal meeting of the CTG. In addition, the introduction of new digital tools, such as e-registration, simplified the task of identifying the delegates that covered the CTG, and their corresponding contact information, including their email addresses.

2 CURRENT STATUS OF COMMITTEE PRACTICES

2.1. This section describes the current practices of the Goods Council, which have partly incorporated and responded to some of the discussions on improving the CTG's functioning that took place between 2018 and 2021.

2.1 Assistance to delegates

2.2. There is no systematic training programme for Geneva-based delegates on the functioning of the CTG. New delegates assigned to cover the Council occasionally request Secretariat staff to meet with them to go over procedures and documentation. Assistance is provided by email, or through a meeting held either virtually or in person. Technical assistance is not provided to capital-based officials on the work of the Council, as it is not included *per se* in the context of the Regional Trade Policy Courses nor the Geneva-based Advanced Trade Policy Course.

2.2 Organization of Committee work

2.2.1 Digital tools used for Committee work

2.3. The CTG makes use of WTO-wide digital tools, including [e-registration](#) and the "[e-subscription](#)" option in [Documents Online](#). E-registration allows Members to indicate their contact information as well as the WTO bodies each delegate covers or has an interest in. The Secretariat relies on the information provided through this system to identify the delegates that cover the Council and to circulate communications and other documents to them via email, when necessary. The e-subscription function in Documents Online allows delegates to indicate the bodies they follow and to receive daily alerts by email when new documents of their interest are issued, including those issued by the CTG.

2.2.2 Planning and organization of meetings

2.4. The CTG generally holds three formal meetings per year, two during the first half of the year and one before the end of the year; in addition, the CTG occasionally holds informal meetings. Since the introduction of the "tentative annual plan of meetings", dates of meetings are coordinated to the extent possible with the CTG's 14 subsidiary bodies, and Members are informed of the updated plan through a room document that is distributed at each formal meeting. In addition, the Guidelines on the Arrangements for Scheduling of Meetings of WTO Bodies are also taken into account ([WT/L/106](#)).

2.5. The planning and coordination of meetings tends to be more complicated in those years in which a Ministerial Conference is held as the time available for regular WTO work is reduced and compressed. An additional challenge is presented when Ministerial Conference dates have not been fixed and Committees have already "agreed" on dates that could then become difficult to change at a later date.

2.6. There is currently no coordination among Members to plan the issues to be discussed each year by the Council, so the issues are defined individually by Members for each of the formal meetings.

¹⁶ See document [G/C/M/138](#), Agenda Item 44.2.

2.7. In recent meetings, while welcoming the improvements that had been made over the past few years, some delegations expressed concern over the continued problems resulting from the reprogramming of meetings due to last minute changes in other bodies of the WTO. One Member also questioned the articulation with the activities of non-regular bodies.

2.2.3 Formal meetings

2.2.3.1 Communication before meetings

2.8. The Chairperson regularly reminds Members of the dates of upcoming meetings at the end of each Council meeting and again by email. Additional information is also provided to delegations during the preparation of the Airgram.

2.2.3.2 Number of meetings

2.9. Since the beginning of 2019, the Council has held 11 formal and 10 informal meetings, including the November 2022 meeting. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only two formal meetings took place. Although there is no formal requirement to hold informal meetings, there is usually at least one per year to discuss the process for the election of officers of the 14 subsidiary bodies and/or for the discussion with Members on a possible slate of names, as provided in paragraph 7.3 of the Guidelines for Appointment of Officers of WTO Bodies (document WT/L/510).

2.10. Over the past few years, the CTG has only organized one event in addition to its formal and informal meetings, namely the information-sharing session on the WTO's digital tools that will take place on 9 December 2022. More details are provided in Table 1 below.

2.11. Since 2021, due to the increasing number of trade concerns raised by Members, the duration of formal meetings has consistently increased. As there is no regular participation of capital-based officials in Council meetings, time is not set aside for bilateral meetings (as is done for other WTO bodies).

Table 1: Number of formal and informal meetings

Year	Formal meeting (number and duration)	Informal meetings (number and duration)	Other (e.g., workshops, symposia, etc.)
2019	11-12 April (1.5 days) 8-9 July (1.5 days) 14-15 November (1.5 days)	4 March (0.5 days) 17 May (0.5 days) 18 June (0.5 days)	None
2020	10-11 June (1.5 days) 25-26 November (1.5 days)	5 February (0.5 days) 27 July (0.5 days)	None
2021	31 March – 1 April (1.5 days) 8-9 July (1.5 days) 1-2 November (1.5 days)	11 February (0.5 days) 14 July (0.5 days) 26 July (0.5 days)	None
2022	21-22 April (1.5 days) 7-8 July (1.5 days) 24-25 November (+1.5 days)	23 May (0.5 days) 14 October (0.5 days)	9 December (0.5 days) Information session on WTO's Digital Tools

2.2.3.3 Preparation of Airgrams and Agendas

2.12. The Council works with the standard "minimum 10 days before the meeting" (Rule 2 of the General Council's Rules of Procedure). However, in light of the discussions that took place between 2018 and 2021, as well as the practice in other WTO bodies, since the meeting of November 2021

the Secretariat now prepares and circulates the Airgrams of its formal meetings in two steps, as follows:

- a. First, a draft Airgram is issued and circulated approximately one month before the date of the meeting, through the WTO/AIR/CTG/ document series. It includes the standing agenda items and all other relevant information known at the time of its circulation, and indicates the date on which the agenda will close, as well as any other specific issues to take into account for the preparation of the meeting. Standing agenda items vary depending on the meeting (e.g. the first meeting of the year includes the election of the Chairperson, and the last meeting normally includes consideration of requests for extensions of HS-related waivers);
- b. Second, once Members have submitted their documents for consideration by the Council and requested the inclusion of their agenda items, a revised version of the Airgram is issued at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting (WTO/AIR/CTG/XXX/Rev.1). The trade concerns are included in the Airgram on a first-come, first-served basis. Since November 2020, the Airgram has included a separate section on "trade concerns".

2.13. Pursuant to Rule 5 of the General Council's Rules of Procedure, a document with the "Proposed Agenda" for the meeting is prepared by the Secretariat and circulated separately a few days before the formal meeting under the G/C/W document series.¹⁷ This document occasionally includes additional co-sponsors of agenda items (if a request for co-sponsorship had been submitted shortly after the Airgram had already been issued, for example), but typically it replicates the contents of the final version of the Airgram. The CTG does not currently prepare and circulate an annotated agenda.

Table 2: Preparation of the Airgrams and Agendas of formal meetings

Year	Date of formal meeting	Date of circulation of Airgram	No. of days before the meeting
2019	11-12 April 2019	1 April 2019 (Airgram) 8 April 2019 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	10 days 3 days
	8-9 July 2019	28 June 2019 (Airgram) 3 July 2019 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	10 days 5 days
	14-15 November 2019	4 November 2019 (Airgram) 11 November 2019 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	10 days 3 days
2020	10-11 June 2020	20 May 2020 (Airgram) 5 June 2020 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	21 days 5 days
	25-26 November 2020	13 November 2020 (Airgram) 20 November 2020 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	12 days 5 days
2021	31 March – 1 April 2021	19 March 2021 (Airgram) 26 March 2021 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	12 days 5 days
	8-9 July 2021	28 June 2021 (Airgram) 2 July 2021 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	10 days 6 days
	1-2 November 2021	11 October 2021 (Draft Airgram) 22 October 2021 (Final Airgram) 27 October 2021 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	21 days 10 days 5 days
2022	21-22 April 2022	21 March 2022 (Draft Airgram) 8 April 2022 (Final Airgram) 14 April 2022 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	31 days 13 days 7 days
	7-8 July 2022	10 June 2022 (Draft Airgram) 27 June 2022 (Final Airgram) 1 July 2022 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	27 days 10 days 6 days
	24-25 November 2022	25 October 2022 (Draft Airgram) 14 November 2022 (Final Airgram) 21 November 2022 (<i>Proposed agenda</i>)	30 days 10 days 3 days

¹⁷ See, for example, documents G/C/W/811 and G/C/W/823.

2.2.3.4 Distribution of documents prior to meetings

2.14. All documents relevant to a meeting are added under the Documents for Meetings section, under the link for the meeting in the "Meetings" section found on the homepage of the WTO Members' website. These documents are sourced from Documents Online (i.e. under Documents for Meetings, topic: Trade in Goods). Presentations or other documents received in advance are circulated as room documents under the RD/CTG/ document series. Delegates subscribed to the CTG under the e-subscriptions option of Documents Online are alerted daily via email of all new relevant documents issued.

2.15. The CTG's draft annual report to the General Council is prepared by the Secretariat and circulated immediately after the closure of the agenda of the Council's last meeting of the year, to ensure that all the documents that were received on the date of the closure of the agenda are included in the draft reports.

2.2.3.5 Communication after meetings

2.16. The Chairperson does not normally send a follow-up communication after formal meetings. A news item on each regular meeting is posted on the WTO website, as prepared by the Information and External Relations Division (IERD) in consultation with the Market Access Division. The news item lists the key issues discussed, including trade concerns. At the request of Members, discussions concerning trade concerns are not summarized in these news items.

2.2.3.6 Preparation of the minutes

2.17. The Secretariat prepares minutes after every formal meeting, circulated under the [G/C/M](#) document series. The meeting minutes capture all the information shared at the formal meeting, including reports by the Chairperson and Members' interventions and statements. In light of the considerable increase in the number of agenda items over the past three years, the procedures for the preparation of the minutes have been reviewed and streamlined twice. First, starting with the minutes of the Council's meeting of 10 June 2020, the traditional "reported" style, which required considerable editing from the part of the Secretariat and resulted in longer documents, was replaced by minutes with statements reproduced almost verbatim. A second set of changes was introduced in 2021 with a view to streamlining the minutes and the internal steps for their preparation, in particular the order in which translations were handled. These adjustments increased efficiency and led to more compact minutes (i.e. fewer pages to describe each meeting).

2.18. Over the past four years, CTG minutes have had an average length of 89.1 pages and have taken an average of 100.1 days to prepare, with a measurable improvement over the past two years: while in 2019-2020, it took on average 111.4 days to process 86.8 pages, in 2021 and 2022 it has taken on average 88.8 days to process 91.4 pages, which equates to an overall reduction of 20% of the time required to process a 5% increase in the number of pages. See Table 3 for further details.

2.19. Different factors may delay the preparation of the minutes. For example, since two of the CTG's meetings coincide with end of work cycles (summer and end-year), there is a partial delay due to in-house procedures (e.g. performance evaluations) and holidays. Because they are not affected by these issues, the minutes of the first meeting (March/April) are systematically prepared in less time than the other two meetings (July and November). In addition, Secretariat staff working on the preparation of minutes are at the same time discharging other tasks deemed of a higher priority.

2.20. The minutes of the CTG are prepared as follows:

- a. At its outset and during the course of a meeting, delegates are prompted and encouraged to submit their full written statements. A list of speakers is drawn-up during the course of the meeting, and subsequently verified;
- b. The verified list of speakers is inserted into an initial frame or template document;

- c. Written statements already received by the Secretariat, as well as the statements by the Chairperson, are inserted into this initial draft in the appropriate places. In case the statements are not provided within 10 days of the conclusion of the meeting, the Secretariat sends one or more reminders to the delegates concerned and awaits a response. In case the delegates still do not share their draft statement, the Secretariat proceeds to type the statements from the recording;
- d. Written statements received by the Secretariat in French or Spanish are sent for translation into English. Once the translation is received, it is then inserted into the draft minutes in the appropriate place;
- e. Once the draft includes all statements, the complete draft is edited and reviewed to correct factual errors, inconsistencies, and typos. The text is also formatted and checked for consistent WTO style and general readability. The Secretariat often contacts delegations to clarify certain aspects, as necessary. The person in charge of several of the above-mentioned steps is also in charge of editing the minutes of six other bodies, so delays may ensue from a higher priority given to finalizing the minutes of other Committees (e.g. so they can be issued before their meeting);
- f. Once the draft minutes have been edited, the entire audio recording of the meeting is reviewed to ensure that the written statements in the draft correspond to what each delegate actually said at the meeting. This approach accords with the Chairperson's reminder to delegations at the beginning of each CTG meeting that only what is said at the meeting is recorded in the minutes unless a delegate explicitly indicates under the agenda item in question that they will be submitting a longer written statement for inclusion in the minutes;
- g. The edited draft minutes are then reviewed again in their entirety. Once finalized and approved, the English version of the minutes is circulated to Members. The English language version is then translated into French and Spanish language versions;
- h. In case of error, or upon request of a Member, a corrigendum may be circulated. As a result of the series of quality controls that have been put in place, this has happened only once over the past five years.

Table 3: Preparation of the Minutes

Year	Last date of the formal meeting	Date of circulation of the minutes	No. of pages	No. of days between meeting and circulation
2019	12 April 2019	24 July 2019	75 pages	103 days
	9 July 2019	30 October 2019	104 pages	113 days
	15 November 2019	9 March 2020	74 pages	115 days
2020	11 June 2020	9 October 2020	93 pages	120 days
	26 November 2020	12 March 2021	88 pages	106 days
2021	1 April 2021	16 June 2021	85 pages	76 days
	9 July 2021	21 October 2021	92 pages	104 days
	2 November 2021	28 February 2022	85 pages	118 days
2022	22 April 2022	17 June 2022	96 pages	56 days
	8 July 2022	6 October 2022	99 pages	90 days
	25 November 2022	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

2.21. Pursuant to paragraph 2(c) of the WTO's Procedures for Circulation and Derestriction of WTO Documents (WT/L/452), minutes remain restricted on Documents Online (DOL) for 45 days after their official circulation, after which they are automatically derestricted.

2.2.4 Informal meetings

2.22. Informal meetings are convened through a communication that is sent to the official email addresses of all WTO Members, as well as to the delegates that have registered as covering the CTG in the e-registration system.

2.23. Since February 2021, these emails are also assigned a symbol as Informal Convening Notices, under the [ICN/CTG/](#) document series, and made available through Documents Online. Delegates who have selected the CTG under the e-subscription function of Documents Online also receive an email alerting them whenever this type of document is issued.

Table 4: Convening of informal meetings

Year	Date of informal meeting	Date of communication convening the informal meeting	No. of days between communication and meeting
2019	4 March (0.5 days, BFCTG and TFA)	21 February 2019	11 days
	17 May (0.5 days, AOSB)	15 May 2019	2 days
	18 June (0.5 days, BFCTG and TFA)	12 June 2019	6 days
2020	5 February (0.5 days, BFCTG)	22 January 2020	14 days
	27 July (0.5 days, AOSB)	23 July 2020	4 days
2021	11 February (0.5 days, BFCTG)	1 February 2021	10 days
	14 July (0.5 days, AOSB)	14 July 2021 (urgent reconvening)	0 (same day)
	26 July (0.5 days, AOSB)	21 July 2021 (urgent reconvening)	5 days
2022	23 May (0.5 days, AOSB)	19 May 2022 (urgent reconvening)	4 days
	14 October (0.5 days, MC12)	22 September 2022	22 days

Acronyms used:

AOSB: Appointment of officers of the CTG subsidiary bodies

FCTG: Better functioning of the CTG and its subsidiary bodies

MC12: MC12 implementation matters

TFA: Modification of the annual report on notifications (G/L/223) to reflect the notification obligations in the TFA.

2.3 Substantive work

2.3.1 Thematic sessions

2.24. In its early days, the CTG organized specific thematic sessions on different issues. For example, in 1998, and following discussions that had taken place at the Singapore Ministerial of 1996, the CTG organized a WTO Trade Facilitation Symposium (G/C/W/115). The issue of trade facilitation was eventually included as a standing item on the CTG's agenda, and this contributed to the formal launch of negotiations by the General Council on 1 August 2004 (WT/L/579, Annex D).

2.25. Over the past few years, however, the CTG has not held any thematic sessions, with the exception of the dedicated informal meetings held to discuss the better functioning of the CTG and its subsidiary bodies (see Section 1).

2.3.2 Notifications

2.26. Although the CTG does not review specific notifications, it does oversee the timeliness and completion of the notifications submitted to its subsidiary bodies. At its meeting of 15 October 1996, the CTG considered the report of the Working Group on Notification Obligations and Procedures ([G/L/112](#)) and decided, *inter alia*, that the listing of notification obligations and the compliance therewith, contained in its Annex III, should be maintained on an ongoing basis and circulated to all Members. Accordingly, Annex III of document G/L/112 has been regularly revised under the [G/L/223/](#) document series.

2.27. The format and contents of this document have been periodically reviewed by Members. The present revision incorporates the technical changes that were discussed by the Council on 27 April 2004. As noted by the Chairperson¹⁸, the suggested changes were purely of a technical nature, and were intended to take account of developments that had occurred since the document was first circulated. This understanding was formalized at the CTG's meeting of 5 July 2004.¹⁹

2.28. At its meeting of 23 and 26 March 2018, the CTG agreed to hold consultations on how to modify this report to take account of the entry into force of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.²⁰ The present revision incorporates changes resulting from the consultations that took place on 4 March 2019 concerning this Agreement.²¹

2.3.3 Trade concerns

2.29. Over the past few years, most items on the CTG's agenda are trade concerns raised by one or more Members. The number of trade concerns has consistently increased and more than doubled over the past four years. (See Table 5 below for further details.) Although Members discussed a few years ago how to streamline the process of considering trade concerns at the CTG (see Section 1), there is currently no agreed procedure or guidelines for doing so.

Table 5: Number of trade concerns

Year	Formal meeting (date)	Number of trade concerns
2019	11-12 April 2019	20
	8-9 July 2019	21
	14-15 November 2019	25
2020	10-11 June 2020	28
	25-26 November 2020	33
2021	31 March – 1 April 2021	32
	8-9 July 2021	35
	1-2 November 2021	37
2022	21-22 April 2022	41
	7-8 July 2022	44
	24-25 November 2022	46

¹⁸ In the cover note to the amended document, dated 27 April 2004, and in his statement to Members at the CTG's meeting of 27 April 2004, under Other Business (document G/C/M/73).

¹⁹ Document G/C/M/74, Section III.

²⁰ Document G/C/M/131, paragraphs 2.20 and 2.21.

²¹ See document G/C/M/134, paragraph 2.1.

2.3.4 Reports by the Secretariat

2.30. The only report that is prepared annually for the CTG is the Report on the Updating of the Listing of Notification Obligations and the Compliance Therewith as Set Out in Annex III of the Report of the Working Group on Notification Obligations and Procedures, which circulates under the [G/L/223/](#) document series. The list of notifications in this document does not address their qualitative aspect, that is, the extent to which their content satisfies the informational requirements of the various transparency obligations, or whether they may or may not affect the rights and obligations of Members. The Secretariat does not currently produce any report analysing the trade concerns raised at the CTG.

2.3.5 Participation by external stakeholders

2.31. At its meeting of 18 July 1996, the General Council approved the Guidelines on Observer Status for International Intergovernmental Organizations (Annex 3 of document WT/L/61). The CTG has a number of international intergovernmental organizations that have been granted observer status, which are listed in document [G/L/140/Rev.1](#).

2.32. Since 2012, these organizations have not taken the floor at the CTG. In addition, there has been no interaction with other external stakeholders, including academia, the private sector, and other international intergovernmental organizations.

2.3.6 Work with other Committees or WTO bodies

2.33. The Council for Trade in Goods was established by Article IV:5 of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO, which provides that "[t]he Council for Trade in Goods shall oversee the functioning of the Multilateral Trade Agreements in Annex 1A." Consequently, the CTG oversees 14 subsidiary bodies, each of which submits a report each year that is then forwarded to the General Council for its consideration. However, besides the coordination necessary to compile the "Status of Notifications" document (see paragraph 2.3.2) and the tentative calendar of meetings (see paragraph 2.5), there is currently no provision for additional or formal coordination between the CTG and its subsidiary bodies.
