

## REPORT (2007) 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 thus far in 2007: on 29 March, and 6 November. The minutes of these meetings are contained in documents G/IT/M/48 to G/IT/M/49. Mr. Khalid I. Emara (Egypt) was elected Chairman of the Committee for 2007.
3. The total number of participants to the Ministerial Declaration is seventy. Since the last report, the schedule of the United Arab Emirates was circulated and approved by the Committee. At the meeting of 6 November 2008, the Committee agreed that the ITA schedule of Ukraine will be deemed to be approved unless any participant would notify in writing to the Secretariat within two weeks from the date of circulation of Ukraine's ITA schedule. At the moment, Ukraine's draft ITA schedule of commitments is under verification by the Secretariat. It is anticipated that Ukraine will soon become the 71<sup>st</sup> participant to the Ministerial Declaration once its schedule is approved. It is noted that as part of Ukraine's WTO accession commitments, the concessions contained in Ukraine's ITA schedule will come into effect upon the date of Ukraine's accession to the WTO. 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 work on the Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) Work Programme. It took note of the Secretariat's papers on the subject (G/IT/SPEC/Q2/11/Rev.1 and G/IT/SPEC/Q4/19/Rev.2) which provided an overview of the submissions and an overview of the survey responses. The Committee proceeded with its work on the EMC/EMI Pilot Project and approved the "Guidelines for EMC/EMI Conformity Assessment Procedures" (G/IT/25) on an *ad referendum* basis. It also took note of the Secretariat's note of the "Draft List of the Types of Conformity Assessment Procedures for EMC/EMI Used by ITA Participants" (G/IT/W/17/Rev.4).
5. The Committee further continued its work on classification divergences. In this respect, the Committee continued to use the last report from the customs experts (G/IT/14/Rev.1/Add.1) and the compilation document, as revised by the Secretariat (G/IT/W/6/Rev.3), as the basis for its discussions. In the past year, the Committee focused its discussions on the List V items (G/IT/W15, G/IT/W/20

and JOB(07)/91/Rev.1). Communications were also received from the World Customs Organization (WCO) concerning List III (G/IT/26/Add.2).

6. As a follow-up to the IT Symposium organized by the Committee in October 2004, a number of elements were taken up for discussions in the past year (G/IT/W/14), and in particular on the issue of classification related to the transpositions of HS96 to HS2002 (G/IT/W/22) and of HS2002 to HS2007 (G/IT/W/25 and (JOB(07)/96). Discussions are expected to continue on these matters in the course of its future work.

7. Based on the decision taken by the Committee in 2006, an IT Symposium was organized on 28 and 29 March 2007 with the participation of the private sector to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the ITA. The purpose of the Symposium was to conduct a review of the operation of the ITA over the past decade with the increased participation of developing countries; to provide an overview of the status quo or the dynamics of the IT sector, taking into account the latest developments in technological convergence and the impact of globalisation; and to highlight the prospects for and challenges to further expansion of trade in ITA products with a view to ensuring the original objective of the ITA is maintained. A chairman's summary of the symposium, as well as the statements and presentations of all speakers are available on the WTO website.

8. At the meetings of 29 March and 6 November 2007, the Committee discussed the proposals by the United States concerning product coverage of the current ITA (G/IT/W/21, G/IT/W/23 and G/IT/W/26).

9. 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. Two participants were still awaiting the completion of domestic procedural requirements or had not yet submitted the necessary documentation.

10. 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.

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