

**Council for Trade in Goods  
Committee on Market Access****REPORT ON THE CURRENT FUNCTIONING OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS****REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

The following report is being submitted by the Chairperson of the Committee on Market Access, Mr Kenya Uehara, at the request of the Chairperson of the Council for Trade in Goods<sup>1</sup>, and was prepared with the assistance of the Secretariat.

**1 PAST EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

1.1. The Committee on Market Access (CMA, or the Committee) has regularly engaged in discussions on improving different aspects of its work and to adapt to new circumstances. As a result of these initiatives, improvements have been introduced in the following areas:

- **Notification of quantitative restrictions (QRs):** In 2009, the Chairperson of the General Council requested all relevant WTO bodies to discuss how to improve the timeliness and completeness of notifications and other information flows in their respective areas. In this context, the Committee had examined how to improve the level of compliance with the notification requirements under the [1995 Decision on Notification Procedures for Quantitative Restrictions](#) (QR Decision). These discussions led to a revised QR Decision, which was adopted by the Council for Trade in Goods in June 2012 ([G/L/59/Rev.1](#)) and is the current procedure for the notification of QRs to the Committee.
- **Changes to WTO Schedules of concessions:** The Committee oversees the application of procedures to change the WTO Schedules of concessions (Goods Schedules)<sup>2</sup>, which include a variety of changes, such as: the rectifications and modifications of Schedules under the GATT Decision of 26 March 1980 (document [L/4962](#), hereinafter the "1980 Procedures"); the renegotiations of concessions under Article XXVIII of the GATT 1994; and the transposition procedures to account for amendments to the Harmonized System (HS). In 2019, following a request by some Members to improve access to the different legal instruments comprising the Schedules, the Secretariat started working on an online system which could facilitate access to all relevant information relating to Goods Schedules. This work concluded in September 2020 with the launch of the "[Goods Schedules e-Library](#)".
- **Consolidated Tariff Schedules (CTS) Database:** The Committee oversees the CTS database which consolidates all the latest certified tariff concessions and other commitments contained in WTO Members' Schedules of concessions and has regularly considered changes to the format in which the CTS database is structured.<sup>3</sup> Since June 2021, in response to a request by Members, the complete CTS database has been made available in MS Excel, in addition to MS Access.
- **Integrated Database (IDB):** The Committee oversees the content, operation, and access to the IDB, which is a database that compiles applied tariff and import data notified by Members. The IDB was regulated by a decision originally adopted in December 1995, which

<sup>1</sup> Document [JOB/CTG/18](#).

<sup>2</sup> Document [WT/L/47](#).

<sup>3</sup> See for example: documents [G/MA/63](#); [G/MA/110](#); [G/MA/156](#); [G/MA/244](#); [JOB/MA/13](#); and [JOB/MA/13/Rev.1](#).

was amended in 1997.<sup>4</sup> In 2009, in the context of the discussions on how to improve the timeliness and completeness of notifications, the Committee adopted two decisions relating to the dissemination policy and the use by the Secretariat of official national, regional or international sources for the collection of data with a view to enhancing Members' compliance with the IDB notifications.<sup>5</sup> In 2018, the Committee held consultations on how to update and improve the IDB Decision, also in light of technological developments. These discussions concluded in May 2019 with the adoption of a fully revised Decision on "Modalities and Operation of the Integrated Database" ([G/MA/367](#)), which has led to an increased compliance with the notification requirements.

- **Feedback sessions on the databases:** pursuant to paragraph 15 of the 2019 IDB Decision, the Committee regularly holds feedback sessions with Members with a view to continuously improving the functionality of the WTO data dissemination and online tools. In July 2019, the CMA organized the first dedicated session entitled "Feedback on the WTO's publications and online tools to disseminate tariff and import data".<sup>6</sup> A second feedback session took place on 16 June 2021.<sup>7</sup> In response to the feedback provided by Members, and with a view to better responding to their needs, the Secretariat has introduced a series of modifications to the existing systems and databases (e.g. dissemination of CTS files in Excel in addition to MS Access format), and has been working on major improvements to other systems, such as a newly redesigned version of the [Tariff Analysis Online](#) database (TAO) that would integrate in one place all information and data on tariffs and trade using the most recent technologies.
- **Experience-sharing sessions on COVID-19:** As a result of discussions concerning the notifications and other information submitted by Members on measures adopted in the context of the pandemic, in 2022, the Committee began a series of experience-sharing sessions to better understand Members' policy responses to this pandemic (see Section 2.5.1 below).<sup>8</sup>

## 2 CURRENT STATUS OF COMMITTEE PRACTICES

### 2.1 Assistance to delegates

2.1. The Secretariat regularly provides bilateral assistance (via email, telephone, in person, and most recently through an increasing number of virtual meetings) to Members to help them to comply with the several procedures and notifications under the purview of the Committee (see section 2.5 below).

2.2. Since 2020, following a request by the Chairperson, the Secretariat has made a presentation, on a regular basis (at least once a year), on the basic functioning of the CMA during one of its informal meetings.

2.3. In 2022, following a survey circulated to Members, the Secretariat began to organize training targeting Geneva-based delegates on the substantive topics covered by the Committee. The CMA does not deliver specific training for capital-based officials. However, all substantive topics covered by the Committee are part of the regular training programmes implemented by the WTO Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (Regional and Advanced Trade Policy Courses).

<sup>4</sup> See document [WT/L/225](#).

<sup>5</sup> Decisions of the Committee on Market Access of 13 July 2009 ([G/MA/238](#)) and Framework to Enhance IDB Notifications Compliance of 13 July 2009 ([G/MA/239](#)). See also document [JOB/MA/106](#).

<sup>6</sup> For a summary of this feedback session, see document [G/MA/W/144](#). See also document G/MA/M/71 paragraphs 5.13-5.20.

<sup>7</sup> For a summary of this feedback session, see document [G/MA/W/144/Add.1](#).

<sup>8</sup> For more information on the work done by the Committee on Market Access in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, see the report to the CTG circulated in document G/MA/W/181.

## 2.2 Organization of Committee work

### 2.2.1 Digital tools used for Committee work

2.4. In July 2020, the Committee began discussing the possibility of using the eAgenda system that had been developed by the SPS and TBT Committees. At its formal meeting of 12 November 2020, the Committee agreed to begin a pilot project to adjust the system to the needs of the CMA and to use it on a voluntary basis.<sup>9</sup> Since April 2021, the [eAgenda](#) has been used to prepare the agenda for the Committee's formal meetings. The Secretariat prepared explanatory guidelines on how to use the CMA eAgenda in English, French, and Spanish<sup>10</sup>.

2.5. The eAgenda is used by Geneva and capital-based delegates to add items to the agenda, including new or previously raised trade concerns, and to upload their statements. In preparation for the last formal meeting of the Committee, in October 2022, all trade concerns were added using the eAgenda (by 14 Members) and 20 Members uploaded their statements into the system.

2.6. The trade concerns discussed in the CMA are included in the WTO [Trade Concerns Database](#), which was initially developed by the SPS and TBT Committees. Currently, the system is administered in cooperation with these Committees, with a view to providing greater transparency and a cross-cutting overview of trade concerns raised.

2.7. The CMA also uses a number of online systems and databases to facilitate access to notifications and other information, including:

- [Goods Schedules e-Library](#): is a dedicated system that facilitates access to the procedures and legal instruments that make up the WTO Schedules of concessions. It also allows users to download the Consolidated Tariff Schedules (CTS) files, which are standardized files of all WTO Members' tariff commitments on trade in goods.
- [List of Members' official websites with tariff information and import statistics](#): this section of the WTO website provides direct access (weblinks) to the official national websites of Members in which tariff or import data are publicly available, pursuant to paragraph 16 of the IDB Decision.
- [Tariff Analysis Online](#): is a dedicated system that provides access and analysis of applied and bound tariffs, and import data. It also provides access to the HS transposition files in preparation for the multilateral review.
- [Quantitative Restrictions \(QR\) Database](#): provides access to QR notifications and analyses the information contained in such notifications.

2.8. The CMA does not maintain a contact list of delegates following the Committee. Rather, it relies on the WTO [e-registration](#) system to contact delegations and send communications by email. Emails are generally sent from the WTO address [cma@wto.org](mailto:cma@wto.org).

### 2.2.2 Planning and organization of meetings

2.9. The number of CMA meetings varies from one year to another. As a minimum, the Committee holds two formal meetings and three informal meetings a year. Informal meetings are largely used to conduct HS multilateral reviews. However, during the period 2019-2022, the number of informal meetings has steadily increased, and informal meetings have also been used to discuss a variety of topics in preparation for formal meetings, or based on Members' inputs and requests (see Table 1 below).

2.10. To the extent possible, formal meetings are organized in coordination with the meetings of other subsidiary bodies of the CTG, in an effort to avoid scheduling conflicts, especially with those Committees that are followed by the same delegates.

2.11. The dates of formal and informal meetings for the following year are announced at the last formal meeting of the year and delegates are regularly reminded about the meeting dates

<sup>9</sup> Document [G/MA/M/73](#), paragraph 29.7.

<sup>10</sup> Document [JOB/MA/151](#).

throughout the year. The Chairperson reminds delegations of the subsequent meetings at the end of each meeting. The meeting dates are also included in all convening notices of informal meetings and emails by the Chairperson. Once the dates are confirmed, they are published on the WTO website (under Meetings).

## 2.3 Formal meetings

### 2.3.1 Communication before meetings

2.12. Since March 2020, the CMA has adopted the practice of sending an email to all delegations one month prior to formal meetings to provide advance notice of the upcoming meetings and to inform them that the eAgenda is open for the inclusion of items. The email, sent by the Secretariat on behalf of the Chairperson, contains a courtesy copy of the draft Airgram with information about the agenda closing date and date of circulation of the final Airgram (see section 2.3.3 below).

### 2.3.2 Number of meetings

2.13. The number of CMA meetings has steadily increased since 2019. In addition to formal and informal meetings, in the period 2019-2022, the Committee has organized several other dedicated activities, such as feedback sessions, workshops, information and experience-sharing sessions, and training activities (Table 1).

2.14. In 2020, during the lockdown, the CMA was the first Committee to hold a formal meeting in virtual format (through Interprefy) and was able to carry on with all its meetings as scheduled.

**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.)
<b>2019</b>	9 April (1 day) 28 May (1 day) 11 November (1 day)	21 February (0.5 days) 9 April (0.5 days) 13 May (0.5 days) 24 September (0.5 days)	17 July 2019, First Feedback session on WTO's publications and online tools to disseminate tariff and import data (0.5 days)
<b>2020</b>	8 June (1 day) 12-16 November (1.5 days)	28 February (0.5 days) 20 May (0.5 days) 10 July (0.5 days) 16 October (0.5 days)	3 September 2020, WTO-WCO capacity-building workshop on the Harmonized System convention for WTO Members (1 day)
<b>2021</b>	29-30 April (1.5 days) 11 October (1 day)	28 January (0.5 days) 26 May (0.5 days) 16 June (0.5 days) 21 September (0.5 days) 9 December (0.5 days)	16 June 2021, Second Feedback session on WTO's publications and online tools to disseminate tariff and import data (0.5 days) 21 September 2021, Information Session on QRs and their relation to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (0.5 days)
<b>2022</b>	30-31 March (1.5 days) 18-19 October (2 days)	1 February (0.5 days) 27 June (0.5 days) 23 November (0.5 days)	28 January 2022, CMA Information Session on COVID-19 (0.5 days) 4 March 2022, 1 <sup>st</sup> Experience sharing session on COVID-19 (0.5 days) 26 April 2022, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Experience sharing session on COVID-19 (0.5 days) 18 July 2022, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Experience sharing session on COVID-19 (0.5 days)

Year	Formal meeting (number and duration)	Informal meetings (number and duration)	Other (e.g. workshops, symposia, etc.)
			<p>16 September 2022, 4<sup>th</sup> Experience sharing session on COVID-19 (0.5 days)</p> <p>17 October 2022, WCO-WTO Workshop on Changes to the Harmonized System and the Transposition of WTO Schedules Of Concessions (0.5 days)</p> <p>21 November 2022, CMA session with external stakeholders on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic (0.5 days)</p> <p>21 November 2022, 5<sup>th</sup> Experience sharing sessions on COVID-19 (0.5 days)</p>

### 2.3.3 Preparation of Airgrams and Agendas

2.15. CMA formal meetings are convened through an Airgram. The CMA has been working with the standard "minimum 10 days before the meeting" (Rule 2 of the General Council's Rule of Procedure). Since the eAgenda platform has become operational for the CMA as of 29 April 2021, the Committee's current practice is to use the platform for the preparation of its meetings.

2.16. Since October 2020, and with a view to providing Members with more time to prepare, the Secretariat circulates the Airgram in two steps:

- a. First, the Secretariat issues a draft Airgram which is circulated approximately one month before the date of the meeting through the WTO/AIR/MA/ document series. This draft Airgram includes only the standing agenda items and all other known information as of the date of 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. The standing agenda items vary depending on the meeting. As explained above, the draft Airgram is emailed to delegations on the same day that it is circulated, and becomes the basic structure used for the eAgenda.
- b. The revised Airgram, containing the final version of the agenda for the upcoming formal meeting, including trade concerns and other items raised by Members, is issued at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting (WTO/AIR/MA/XX/Rev.1).

2.17. The eAgenda opens on the same day of the circulation of the draft Airgram and is an online version of the draft Airgram, listing the same items. Available documents (Secretariat reports, notifications, etc.) are incorporated by the Secretariat in the eAgenda upon its opening, and additional documents are added as soon as they are circulated. This allows Members to become aware of, and have direct access to, documents as soon as they become available without having to wait for the official revised Airgram to be circulated.

2.18. Members can add new or previously raised trade concerns, as well as other types of agenda items through the eAgenda from its opening (one month prior to the meeting) to its closure (same day as the agenda's closing date). At the same time delegates can upload statements and decide whether statements shall be available for interpreters only, or if they can also be visible to other Members. Once the meeting has concluded, the eAgenda remains open for 14 days so that delegations can upload their final statements, should they wish to do so.

2.19. The CMA has an established practice of using an annotated agenda, which is made available the week after the circulation of the final Airgram. Over the past years, it has been circulated under the JOB/MA document series. The annotated agenda provides additional information for each agenda item in order to help Members prepare for the upcoming formal meeting.

2.20. The number of items discussed by the CMA has also consistently increased during the last four years, passing from 20 items on the agenda of the formal meeting held in May 2019 (of which 11 were trade concerns) to 45 items on the agenda on the formal meeting of October 2022 (of which 33 were trade concerns).

**Table 2: Preparation of Airgrams and Agendas**

Year	Date of formal meeting	Date of circulation of Airgram	No. of days before the meeting
<b>2019</b>	9 April 2019	19 March 2019 (Airgram)	21
	28 May 2019	17 May 2019 (Airgram)	11
	11 November 2019	31 October 2019 (Airgram)	11
<b>2020</b>	8 June 2020	29 May 2020 (Airgram)	10
	12 November 2020	21 October 2020 (Draft Airgram)	22
		30 October 2020 (Final Airgram)	13
<b>2021</b>	29-30 April 2021	31 March 2021 (Draft Airgram)	29
		15 April 2021 (Final Airgram)	14
	11-12 October 2021	13 September 2021 (Draft Airgram)	28
		1 October 2021 (Final Airgram)	10
<b>2022</b>	30-31 March 2022	2 March 2022 (Draft Airgram)	28
		18 March 2022 (Final Airgram)	12
	18-19 October 2022	19 September 2022 (Draft Airgram)	29
		7 October 2022 (Final Airgram)	11

#### 2.3.4 Distribution of documents prior to meetings

2.21. Since 2019, the Secretariat has adopted the practice of issuing its regular reports and presentations to the Committee under several agenda items as room documents (RD/MA document series) and circulating them before the meeting. This approach serves two purposes: (i) reducing the length of Secretariat's interventions at the meeting, especially in light of the increasing number of agenda items; and (ii) providing delegates with a full written report which facilitates their task of reporting back to capital. To the extent possible, the Chairperson's reports to the Committee are also circulated in advance as room or JOB/MA/ documents.

2.22. The circulation of notifications is done as soon as they are submitted to the Secretariat (either through the Central Registry of Notifications or directly to the CMA team) and verified by the CMA team. The circulation of Secretariat reports and draft annual reports is done right after the agenda closes, to ensure that all the documents that were received are included in the draft reports. Members' submissions and notifications received after the closing of the agenda for the meeting are acknowledged at the meeting, but are only considered at the next formal meeting.

2.23. All documents relevant to a meeting are added under the Documents for Meetings section in Documents Online and under the link for the meeting in the WTO calendar of the WTO webpage.

#### 2.3.5 Communication after meetings

2.24. There is no established practice in the CMA to circulate communications after the formal meetings. However, in some cases<sup>11</sup>, a follow-up email has been sent by the Chairperson after the formal meeting to remind delegates of key deadlines that have been communicated at the meeting, as well as any other important information.

<sup>11</sup> For example, follow-up emails were sent after the formal meetings of March and October 2022.

2.25. The news item for regular meetings is prepared by the WTO Information and External Relations Division in consultation with the CMA team.

### 2.3.6 Preparation of the minutes

2.26. The Secretariat prepares minutes after every formal meeting. The CMA minutes currently capture all information shared at the meeting in a "verbatim" style, including the Secretariat reports, Members' statements as well the Chairperson's reports where relevant. The minutes of a formal meeting of the CMA also contain information on informal meeting(s) and additional activities organized by the Committee outside of the regular meetings. This is generally done by means of a summary prepared under the responsibility of the Chairperson, which is read at the formal meeting and incorporated in the minutes for the record.

2.27. The Secretariat incorporates statements sent by delegations; however, the Secretariat always verifies that the minutes reflect what has actually been said at the meeting. In case of doubt, the Secretariat may ask Members to verify that their statement has been reproduced in the correct way.

2.28. In the 2019-2022 period, the minutes have had an average length of 52 pages and have taken an average of 163 days to prepare (Table 3). While the number of pages has grown by around 70% between 2019 and 2022, the number of days to prepare and process them has increased by only 16%.

**Table 3: Preparation of the Minutes/Summary Reports**

Year	Date of the formal meeting	Date of circulation of the minutes	No. of pages	No. of days
<b>2019</b>	28 May 2019	30 October 2019	39	155
	11 November 2019	27 May 2020	37	198
<b>2020</b>	8 June 2020	30 October 2020	44	144
	12 November 2020	7 April 2021	55	146
<b>2021</b>	29-30 April 2021	4 October 2021	69	158
	11-12 October 2021	25 March 2022	59	165
<b>2022</b>	30-31 March 2022	27 September 2022	67	181
	18-19 October 2022	-	-	-

2.29. Several factors have an impact on the time required to prepare and process the minutes. First, the Secretariat has to wait for all the statements to be submitted by delegates. In case the statements are not provided after 14 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 delegate fails to submit the draft statement, the Secretariat proceeds to transcribe the statement from the recording. Once the draft minutes have been drafted and edited, the entire audio recording of the meeting is reviewed to ensure that the written statements in the draft correspond to what an individual delegate actually said at the meeting. The edited draft minutes are then reviewed again and issued. The preparation of the minutes is also complicated by the fact that the formal meeting is often close to other Committee meetings<sup>12</sup> and the same staff has to edit many sets of minutes concurrently.

2.30. In light of the considerable increase in the number of agenda items over the past three years, the procedures for the preparation of the CMA minutes have been reviewed and streamlined twice. First, starting with the minutes of the CMA meeting of 29-30 April 2021, the traditional "reporting" style, which required considerable editing on the part of the Secretariat, was abandoned and replaced with an approach where statements are reproduced largely verbatim. Second, the internal

<sup>12</sup> For example, between the formal meeting of 30-31 March and the formal meeting of 18-19 October, the CMA held one informal meeting, three experience-sharing sessions, one workshop, and two training activities.



steps for the preparation of the minutes, and in particular the order in which translations were handled, were reviewed and streamlined in 2021, with significant gains in efficiency.

2.31. The minutes are circulated under the G/MA/M document series and are automatically derestricted 45 days after the date of circulation, in accordance with the [derestriction procedures of WTO documents](#).

## 2.4 Informal meetings

2.32. Informal meetings are convened through a communication sent to the official email addresses of all Members, as well as to delegates' list of contacts retrieved from the e-registration system (using only the list of delegates signed up for the Committee on Market Access). Since the informal meeting of 16 October 2020, these emails are also assigned a symbol as Informal Convening Notices, under the [ICN/MA](#) document series, and made available through Documents Online.

2.33. The convening notice contains information on the meeting date, time, and the list of issues proposed for discussion. The convening email is typically sent between one month and two weeks in advance of a given meeting (Table 4).

2.34. After an informal meeting, the Chairperson sends a "follow-up email" to Members to summarize the main outcomes of the meeting and to remind them of key deadlines, where appropriate, and upcoming meeting dates.

**Table 4: Convening of informal meetings**

Year	Date of informal meeting	Date of communication convening the informal meeting	No. of days
<b>2019</b>	21 February 2019	11 January 2019	41
	9 April 2019	2 April 2019	7
	13 May 2019	30 April 2019	13
	17 July 2019	13 June 2019	34
	24 September 2019	11 September 2019	13
<b>2020</b>	28 February 2020	17 January 2020	42
	20 May 2020	12 May 2020	8
	10 July 2020	17 June 2020	23
	16 October 2020	16 September 2020	30
<b>2021</b>	28 January 2021	17 December 2020	42
	26 May 2021	12 May 2021	14
	16 June 2021	4 June 2021	12
	21 September 2021	8 September 2021	13
	9 December 2021	25 November 2021	14
<b>2022</b>	1 February 2022	17 January 2022	15
	27 June 2022	20 June 2022	7
	23 November 2022	11 November 2022	12

## 2.5 Substantive work

### 2.5.1 Experience-sharing sessions and workshops

2.35. The CMA has organized several dedicated sessions and workshops over the past years. In most cases, these activities do not follow a regular calendar and respond to Members' demands.



2.36. Pursuant to paragraph 15 of the IDB Decision, the Secretariat holds feedback sessions on the WTO's publications and online tools to disseminate tariff and import data. The first two feedback sessions were organized in 2019 and 2021.<sup>13</sup>

2.37. In 2020 and 2022, the CMA organized two workshops in collaboration with the World Customs Organization (WCO). The first was a capacity-building workshop on the Harmonized System (HS) Convention for WTO Members, which took place on 3 September 2020, and the second was a [workshop on changes to the HS and the transposition of WTO Schedules of Concessions](#), which took place on 17 October 2022.

2.38. In the area of quantitative restrictions, the CMA organized a [capacity-building workshop on notifications of QRs](#) on 24-25 April 2018, which was open to Geneva-based delegates as well as selected capital-based officials in charge of the QR notifications. On 26 September 2021, the Committee also organized an [information session on QRs and their relation to Multilateral Environmental Agreements](#), in collaboration with the WTO Trade and Environment Division, the WCO, and the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (UNEP).

2.39. In 2022, the CMA has so far held six information and experience-sharing sessions on trade in COVID-19-related goods (see also Table 1) which were attended by both capital and Geneva-based delegates.<sup>14</sup>

2.40. In addition, two training activities for Geneva-based delegates following the CMA were delivered by the Secretariat on (i) market access issues (on 6 July 2022) and (ii) the HS (on 19 September 2022).

## 2.5.2 Notifications

2.41. The CMA has the mandate to oversee a number of procedures relating to tariff and non-tariff measures<sup>15</sup>, from which an important number of notifications are received and examined every year. However, it shall be noted that not all notifications are examined in the context of regular meetings of the Committee. In most cases, the Secretariat prepares a status report that is periodically submitted for consideration by the Committee (see also section 2.5.4 below).

2.42. The following procedures and notifications fall within the mandate of the CMA:

- Rectifications and Modifications of WTO Schedules of concessions for goods pursuant to the 1980 Procedures. These documents are reviewed through written and bilateral procedures, and they are not examined at the CMA meetings unless a Member requests their inclusion on the agenda;
- Renegotiations of concessions pursuant to GATT Article XXVIII of the GATT 1994. These documents are reviewed through written and bilateral procedures, and they are not examined at the CMA meetings unless a Member requests their inclusion on the agenda;
- QR notifications pursuant to the Decision on Notification Procedures for Quantitative Restrictions.<sup>16</sup> Pursuant to paragraph 1 of the QR Decision, all notifications are automatically placed on the agenda for review by Members at formal meetings;
- Notification of tariff and import data pursuant to the 2019 IDB Decision.

2.43. In addition, since 2020, the Committee has considered a series of voluntary submissions by Members with measures aimed at facilitating trade in COVID-19 goods. These submissions were circulated under the G/MA/W document series and were compiled by the Secretariat in a report circulated under the G/MA/W/157 document symbol and submitted for consideration by the

<sup>13</sup> G/MA/W/144 document series.

<sup>14</sup> See document G/MA/W/181 for more information.

<sup>15</sup> Document WT/L/47.

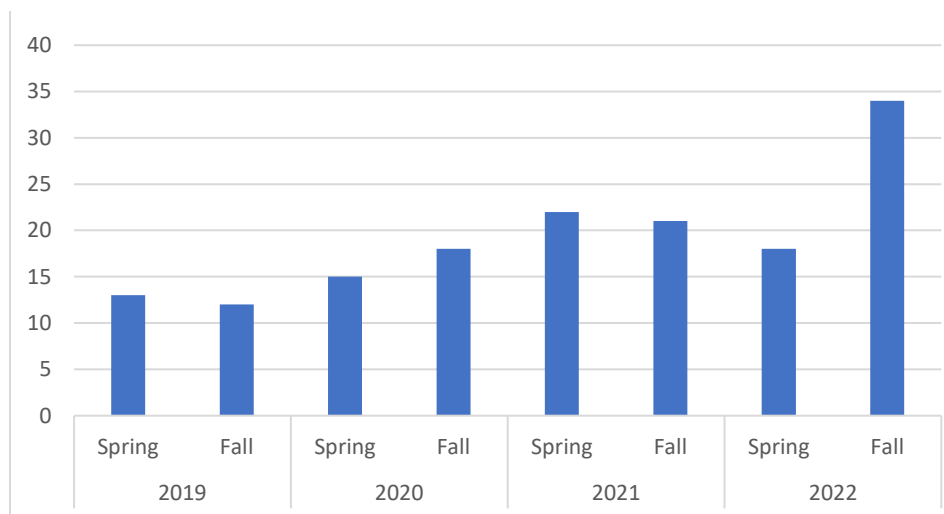
<sup>16</sup> Document G/L/59/Rev.1, 3 July 2012.

Committee at each formal meeting. The Secretariat also prepares a regular report on the trade policy measures adopted by Members during the pandemic (see paragraph 2.46 below).

### 2.5.3 Specific Trade Concerns

2.44. The number of trade concerns raised by Members at the CMA has increased substantially over the last few years. For example, 12 trade concerns were raised at the first formal meeting in 2019, whereas at the formal meeting in October 2022, the number of trade concerns was 34, of which 17 were new concerns. Trade concerns raised in the CMA cover a variety of trade-related measures, ranging from tax-related measures (e.g. import tariffs, other duties and charges, internal taxes and regulations) to non-tariff measures (e.g. prohibitions and bans, import and export licences, regulatory requirements) that have an impact on market access conditions for WTO Members.

**Chart 1: Number of trade concerns raised in the Committee on Market Access since 2019**



2.45. Since 2021, information on trade concerns raised in the CMA is available in the [Trade Concerns Database](#). Members have so far not asked the Secretariat to further analyse the trade concerns raised.

### 2.5.4 Reports by the Secretariat

2.46. The Secretariat regularly produces nine reports for consideration by the Committee under the different areas of work, including the following:

#### HS Transpositions

- a. Status Report on the introduction of HS changes (HS1996, HS2002, HS2007, HS2012, and HS2017<sup>17</sup>) to Schedules of concessions ([G/MA/W/158](#) document series);

#### IDB Decision

- b. Status of IDB notifications ([G/MA/IDB/2/Rev](#) document series);
- c. List of Members' Official Websites with tariff information and import statistics ([G/MA/IDB/W/13](#) document series);
- d. Status of the CTS Database;

<sup>17</sup> These are circulated in documents [JOB/MA/41](#), [JOB/MA/42](#), [JOB/MA/104](#), [JOB/MA/129](#), and [JOB/MA/143](#).

QR Decision

- e. A report with the status of notifications is circulated under [G/MA/QR/](#) document series;
- f. A factual report describing the contents of the notifications is prepared annually and circulated under the [G/MA/W/114](#) document series;

Rectifications, modifications and renegotiations of Schedules

- g. A status report listing the status of Goods Schedules for each Member is prepared annually and circulated under the [G/MA/W/23/](#) document series;
- h. A list of procedures under Article XXVIII of the GATT is updated regularly and circulated under the [G/MA/W/123/](#) document series;

Other

- i. The draft annual report is prepared by the Secretariat for consideration by the Committee at its formal meeting in the autumn.

2.47. In addition to the above-mentioned regular reports, the Secretariat also prepares *ad hoc* reports at the request of Members that change over time. These include:

- a. In relation to the HS transposition work, once a new amendment to the HS nomenclature is approved by the WCO and enters into force, the Secretariat prepares draft Procedures for the introduction of the different HS amendments in WTO Schedules of concessions for Members' consideration. Once the procedures have been approved, the Secretariat also prepares for Members' consideration draft Notes on the Methodology. Both documents are submitted to the Committee for approval. The HS transposition procedures are forwarded to the General Council, through the CTG, for adoption;
- b. Since the formal meetings in 2020, the Secretariat has prepared and periodically updated two reports on trade-related measures relating to the COVID-19 pandemic: (i) a list of notifications relating to COVID-19 ([G/MA/W/157](#) document series); and (ii) a summary of export restrictions and trade-easing measures relating to the COVID-19 pandemic ([G/MA/W/168](#) document series);
- c. The Secretariat has also produced summary reports for the four experience-sharing sessions on trade in COVID-19 organized by the Committee in 2022 ([JOB/MA/152](#) document series).

**2.5.5 Participation by external stakeholders**

2.48. The Committee maintains a list with the "Observer Status of International Organizations" ([G/MA/W/11/Rev.2](#)), which includes eight organizations. However, with the exception of the World Customs Organization, these organizations have never taken the floor to participate in a CMA meeting.<sup>18</sup> The WTO Secretariat is also an observer to the Harmonized System Committee of the WCO, but it has only participated occasionally in its meetings.

2.49. Over the past few years, the CMA has considerably improved its coordination with the WCO, and in particular with the Harmonized System Committee. Since 2020, the WCO regularly participates in the CMA formal meetings, under the agenda item "The Harmonized System and the work of the World Trade Organization", to report about activities and developments in relation to the HS that are relevant to the work of the Committee. In the context of COVID-19-related work, the CMA is in regular contact with the WCO, and the Chairperson and the WTO Secretariat (CMA team) have been invited to participate in the Harmonized System Committee's meetings to

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<sup>18</sup> The WCO has the recognised observer status in the CMA pursuant to [G/MA/W/11/Rev.2](#).

discuss the proposals for the classification of essential medical goods in the HS2027 review cycle stemming from the CMA communication to the WCO.<sup>19</sup>

2.50. On 21 November 2022, the Committee organized a session on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic where external stakeholders, mainly from the private sector, academia and other organizations, were invited to speak about their experiences during the pandemic.

#### **2.5.6 Work with other Committees or WTO bodies**

2.51. The Committee has not formally worked together with other Committees, but the Secretariat staff servicing the CMA has occasionally participated in other Committees, and vice versa. Among the most recent examples are the following: the participation by the Trade and Environment Division in the CMA information session on "QRs and the relationship with Multilateral Environmental Agreements", which took place on 21 September 2021; the presentations made by the Secretariat in 2022 on the use and functioning of the CMA eAgenda at the Committee on Import Licensing and Committee on Customs Valuation; and the presentation made by the CMA team on non-tariff measures relating to climate change and relevant work in the WTO at the TESSD Working Group on Environmental Goods and Services.

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<sup>19</sup> [G/MA/406](#).