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## **REPORT (2018) OF THE COMMITTEE OF PARTICIPANTS ON THE EXPANSION OF TRADE IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS**

1.1. 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.

1.2. The Committee has held two formal meetings in 2018: on 17 May and 30 October. The minutes of these meetings are contained in documents G/IT/M/68 and G/IT/M/69. Mr Muhammad Nur Hadri Bin SOPRI (Singapore) was elected Chairman of the Committee for 2018.

1.3. The total number of WTO Members that are participants to the Ministerial Declaration is 82. 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 details that all but one participant had submitted the formal documentation for the rectification and modification of their WTO schedules in order to incorporate the commitments arising from the Ministerial Declaration, and that they had been certified by the Director-General. Two implementation issues, concerning India and China, have been raised at the May and October meetings of the Committee.

1.4. The Committee's rules of procedure provide for observer status in the Committee for WTO Members that 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 issues of HS classification and HS amendments are included on the agenda.

1.5. The Committee continued its deliberations on the Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) Work Programme in 2018. With regard to its work on the EMC/EMI Pilot Project, the Committee took note that, among the 53 participants, 39 had provided survey responses and the Committee encouraged those that had not yet done so to provide the information without any further delay. In considering ways to advance and expand its work on NTBs other than EMC/EMI, the Committee continued its discussions on the follow-up to the workshop held on 7 May 2015 on NTBs affecting trade in IT products and to the Symposium for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ITA held in June 2017. At the request of the Committee, the Chairperson undertook informal consultations with interested delegations to examine the recommendations and avenues that were suggested by industry representatives and such consultations will continue in 2019.

1.6. On classification divergences, with regard to the Committee's Decision concerning the endorsement of the 18 List I-A items for Attachment B (G/IT/27), the Secretariat has been approached by five ITA Participants for technical assistance. With regard to the Committee's Decision for the HS2007 classification of 15 additional "Attachment B" products (G/IT/29), the Secretariat has been approached by one Member for technical assistance. With regard to the possible HS2007 classification for the remaining 22 "Attachment B" items, the Secretariat has received comments from 21 delegations, which were compiled in document G/IT/W/40 and its Addenda and Supplements.

1.7. At the meetings of 17 May and 30 October 2018, the Committee took note of the plurilateral negotiations and the result of an agreement on product expansion among some participants (WT/L/956 and WT/MIN(15)/25), and its implementation. The Committee agreed to revert to this matter at its future meetings.

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