

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Committee on Agriculture

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE: GENERAL COUNCIL OVERVIEW OF WTO ACTIVITIES (1997)

Report by the Chairman

The present report by the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Ambassador Nestor Osorio Londoño, is submitted on his own responsibility as agreed by the Committee.

The Committee on Agriculture held four regular meetings in 1997: on 13-14 March, 26-27 June, 25-26 September and 20-21 November (Secretariat summary reports of these meetings G/AG/R/10 to 13 refer).

In accordance with Article 18.1 of the Agreement on Agriculture, the Committee, at each of its meetings, reviewed progress in the implementation of commitments negotiated under the Uruguay Round reform programme. This review process was undertaken on the basis of notifications submitted by Members in the areas of market access, domestic support and export subsidies and under the provisions of the Agreement relating to export prohibitions and restrictions. In 1997 the Committee reviewed 242 notifications in these areas compared with 193 in 1996, with domestic support and export subsidy notifications accounting for most of the increase. The Committee also addressed a wide range of general and specific matters relevant to the implementation of commitments that were raised under the provisions of Article 18.6 of the Agreement. A number of the matters thus raised have been or continue to be the subject of informal or formal consultations.

In general, the notification requirements established by the Committee for the purpose of reviewing implementation of reduction and other scheduled commitments under the Uruguay Round reform programme are being satisfactorily complied with by most Members. The performance for notifications relating to compliance with general obligations under the rules on domestic support and export subsidies is unsatisfactory. The overall position with respect to notification obligations under Article 18.2 and other relevant provisions of the Agreement is summarized in Annex I to this report.

At its March meeting the Committee reviewed the WTO List of Net Food-Importing Developing Countries and Botswana and Pakistan were included (G/AG/5/Rev.2 refers). The follow-up to the recommendations adopted by the Singapore Ministerial Conference on the implementation, in relation to action on food aid commitments and concessionality guidelines in the context of the Food Aid Convention, of Marrakesh Ministerial Decision on the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Process on Net Food-Importing Developing Countries (paragraph 18 of G/L/125 and WT/MIN(96)/DEC, paragraph 13, refer) has been taken up at the Committee's regular meetings. The follow-up to the Marrakesh Ministerial Decision as a whole was monitored by the Committee pursuant to Article 16.2 of the Agreement at its November meeting.

Under arrangements adopted at the March meeting of the Committee, the process of analysis and exchange of information ("the AIE process") agreed to by the Singapore Ministerial Conference (paragraph 12 of G/L/131 and WT/MIN(96)/DEC, paragraph 19 refer) has been undertaken through informal open-ended meetings. In the AIE process Members are discussing topics in the areas of market access, domestic support and export subsidies, as well as issues of interest to developing countries. Some Members submitted informal papers on these topics. In addition, a number of Secretariat background notes, based on information and data notified by Members, have been provided in order to facilitate the work of the AIE process. These informal papers and background notes are listed in Annex II to this report. Four AIE meetings were held during 1997 with factual summary reports being made to the Committee on each of these meetings.

The following international intergovernmental organizations were accorded regular observer status in the Committee: the FAO, the IMF, the International Grains Council, the OECD, the UNCTAD, the UN World Food Programme and the World Bank.

The Committee adopted the following schedule for the Committee's regular meetings in 1998: 19-20 March, 29-30 September and 17-18 November, plus an additional meeting provisionally scheduled for 25-26 June to cope with the expanding workload of the Committee.

Annex I

Regular notifications pertaining to the 1995 and 1996 years made under the Agreement on Agriculture

	Table MA:1 Tariff quota administration	Table MA:2 Imports under tariff quotas		Table MA:5 Special safeguard - annual		Table DS:1+ Domestic support		Table ES:1+ Export subsidies		Table ES:2 Total exports	
	one-off	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996
Angola	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Antigua and Barbuda	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Argentina	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X		X	X	X	X
Australia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bahrain	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		X		X	NA	NA
Bangladesh	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Barbados	X			X				X		NA	NA
Belize	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Benin	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)	NA		NA	NA
Bolivia	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Botswana	NA	NA	NA	X	X	X		X	X	NA	NA
Brazil	X	X	X	NA	NA	X		X	X	X	X
Brunei Darussalam	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Bulgaria		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Burkina Faso	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Burundi	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Cameroon	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Canada	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
Central African Rep.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Chad	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)	NA		NA	NA
Chile	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colombia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Congo	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Congo, Democratic Rep.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Costa Rica	X										
Côte d'Ivoire	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Cuba	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		X	X	X	X	
Cyprus	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X	X				
Czech Republic	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Djibouti	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Dominica	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Dominican Republic	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			X		NA	NA
Ecuador	X	NA		NA	X	NA		NA	X	NA	NA
Egypt	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
El Salvador	X			X	X			X	X	NA	NA
European Communities	X	X	X	X				X		X	
Fiji	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X	NA	X	NA	NA
Gabon	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Gambia	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)	NA		NA	NA
Ghana	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Grenada	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA		NA	NA
Guatemala	X	X		X				X		NA	NA
Guinea Bissau	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Guinea, Republic of	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA

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	one-off	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996
Guyana	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Haiti	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)	NA		NA	NA
Honduras	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X		X		X	
Hong Kong, China	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X	X	X	X	NA	NA
Hungary	X	X	X	X	X						
Iceland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
India	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Indonesia	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Israel	X			X				X		X	
Jamaica	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Japan	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	NA	NA
Kenya	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X	X	X	X	NA	NA
Korea	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	NA	NA
Kuwait	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Lesotho	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Macau	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X		X		NA	NA
Madagascar	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Malawi	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Malaysia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maldives	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Mali	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Malta	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X		X		NA	NA
Mauritania	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Mauritius	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Mexico	X	X		X		X		X			
Mongolia	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Morocco	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		NA	NA
Mozambique	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Myanmar	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Namibia	NA	NA	NA	X	X	X		X	X	NA	NA
New Zealand	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nicaragua	X			X				X		NA	NA
Niger	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nigeria	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Norway	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pakistan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X		X	X	X	X
Papua New Guinea	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA		NA	NA
Paraguay	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Panama		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Peru	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			X		NA	NA
Philippines	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Poland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Qatar	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA		NA	NA
Romania	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Rwanda	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)	NA		NA	NA
Saint Kitts and Nevis	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA		NA	NA
Saint Lucia	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Saint Vincent & Grenadines	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Senegal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Sierra Leone	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Singapore	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X		X		NA	NA

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	one-off	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996
Slovak Republic	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Slovenia	X	X	X	NA	NA	X	X	X	X	NA	NA
Solomon Islands	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)	NA		NA	NA
South Africa	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sri Lanka	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Suriname	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA					NA	NA
Swaziland	NA	NA	NA							NA	NA
Switzerland - Liechtenstein	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tanzania	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Thailand	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Togo	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
Trinidad and Tobago	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			X		NA	NA
Tunisia	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	NA	NA
Turkey	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X	X	X	X	X	X
Uganda	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)				NA	NA
United Arab Emirates	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA		NA	NA
United States	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	
Uruguay	NA	NA	NA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Venezuela	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Zambia	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(NA)		X	X	NA	NA
Zimbabwe	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA						
Total required to notify	36	33		35		75		96		33	
Notifications received	34	27		33		38		48		26	
Percentage compliance											
- Scheduled commitments	94	82		94		85		87		-	
- Rule related commitments	-	-		-		29		38		79	
- Overall	94	82		94		51		50		79	

1. Agricultural notification requirements are set out in document G/AG/2 and G/AG/2/Add.1. Reference should be made to this document in order to establish applicability of the requirements and the relevant time limits for the submission of notifications.

2. There are currently 132 WTO Members. The list of WTO Members above, however, comprises only 116 Members as the European Communities and its 15 member states provide one notification for each of the respective requirements and Switzerland's notifications are taken to cover Liechtenstein as these two Members have a joint Schedule.

3. The symbols used in the table are as follows:

(a) A blank indicates that this is a requirement applicable to the Member concerned, but that no notification was received up to the cut-off date (24 November 1997). Notifications may be submitted according to various bases (calendar, crop, fiscal years, etc.). The absence of a notification, therefore, does not necessarily indicate an outstanding obligation as the notification may be due only later in 1997. No percentage compliance is

calculated in these cases. The time limit for the submission of one-off MA:1 notifications has now passed for all Members (including those which became Members only in 1996) and the percentage compliance is calculated for this requirement.

(b) "X" denotes that a notification has been received in the WTO. No assessment of the completeness or the quality of the notification with respect to requirements is made or implied.

(c) "NA" indicates that the requirement was not applicable for this WTO Member during the period covered either because no relevant measures are in place (e.g. tariff quotas) or because WTO membership did not take place until 1996 or 1997 hence there were no notification requirements pertaining to 1995 or 1996. For Table DS:1, the least-developed country Members may notify at the end of every second year (indicated by the symbol "(NA)") and such Members are excluded from the total number required to notify.

Annex II

A. Informal papers submitted by Members:

- AIE/1: by Australia on Administration of Tariff Quotas - 13 May 1997
- AIE/2: by the United States on Circumvention of Export Subsidy Commitments - 16 May 1997
- AIE/3: by the United States on Data Supplied Through Notifications - 16 May 1997
- AIE/4: by Australia on "Green Box" Domestic Support - 16 May 1997
- AIE/5: by New Zealand on Administration of Tariff Quotas - 12 August 1997
- AIE/6: by Pakistan, Peru and the Dominican Republic on Issues of Interest to Developing Countries - 19 September 1997
- AIE/7: by the United States on Administration of Tariff-Rate Quotas - 22 October 1997
- AIE/8: by Uruguay on Implementation of Tariff Commitments - 24 October 1997
- AIE/9: by Australia on Tariff Quota Administration: First-Come, First-Served (FCFS) - 29 October 1997
- AIE/10: by the United States on Article 6.5: Direct Payments Under Production-Limiting Programs - 31 October 1997
- AIE/11: by the United States on State Trading Enterprises (Single Desk Buyers and Single Desk Sellers) - 31 October 1997

B. Secretariat Background Papers:

- AIE/S1: Tariff and Other Quotas - 9 September 1997
- AIE/S2: Domestic Support - 28 October 1997
- AIE/S3: Export Subsidies - 3 November 1997
- AIE/S4: Tariff Quota Administration Methods and Tariff Quota Fill - 6 November 1997