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Page: 1/10

**Council for Trade in Goods  
Committee on Trade Facilitation**

**REPORT ON THE CURRENT FUNCTIONING OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON TRADE FACILITATION**

**REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON<sup>1</sup>**

The following report is being submitted by the Chairperson of the Committee on Trade Facilitation, Ambassador H.E. (Dr) Adamu Mohammed ABDULHAMID, under his own responsibility and at the request of the Chairperson of the Council for Trade in Goods.<sup>2</sup> The report was prepared with the assistance of the Secretariat and is organized to provide clarity on the development of the Committee's procedures to oversee the operation and implementation of a new Agreement that contained innovative and unique flexibilities.

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**1 INITIAL STEPS TO ESTABLISH THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

1.1. The Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA, TF Agreement, or the Agreement) entered into force on 22 February 2017. The inaugural meeting of the Committee on Trade Facilitation (CTF, the Committee, the TF Committee) took place on 16 May 2017. The Committee finalized work on its Rules of Procedures at its meeting of 25 June 2019 which were approved by the Council for Trade in Goods at its meeting of 14 November 2019 ([G/L/1342](#)). In 2021, the Committee carried out its first four-year review of the operation and implementation of the Agreement as mandated under Article 23.1.6 of the TFA.

1.2. Following its relatively recent establishment, the Committee has developed its work programme and practices in incremental steps from its first meeting. At the May 2017 meeting, the Chairperson proposed that, in line with the longstanding tradition, established during negotiations, of trade facilitation discussions taking place in a Member-driven, bottom-up manner, consultations with Members would be held to ensure that the Committee could firmly base its work on common ground. The Committee has continued its practices on this basis.

1.3. The inaugural meeting of the Committee on Trade Facilitation took place on 16 May 2017. A proposal on the rules of procedure was circulated on 22 May 2017 in G/TFA/W/1. Subsequently, in October 2017, the Chairperson launched informal, open-ended consultations on the Committee's Rules of Procedure. Discussions continued on this document throughout 2018, until its meeting of 25 June 2019, where the Committee finalized its work on its rules of procedure, contained in document G/TF/W/14, and forwarded them to the Council for Trade in Goods, where they were approved at its meeting of 14 November 2019.

1.4. The only substantive difference with the rules of procedure of the General Council was that the CTF rules of procedure added to the provision on observers in Rule 11 of the General Council rules existing rules set out in the TFA, in particular with respect to Article 23.1.5 which covered the invitation of representatives from international organizations to TFC meetings. The rules of procedure were approved by the Council for Trade in Goods at its meeting of 14 November 2019 ([G/L/1342](#)).

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<sup>1</sup> This draft will be circulated to Members for comments and then circulated under the G/L/ document series.

<sup>2</sup> See document [JOB/CTG/18](#).

## 2 SUBSTANTIVE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

### 2.1 Notifications

2.1. The Committee reviews notifications received under the TFA at each of its meetings during the period under review.

- (i) Transparency notifications: Under Section I of the Agreement, Members are required to submit a number of transparency notifications under articles 1.4 (import, export and transit procedures); 10.4.3 (single window); 10.6.2 (customs brokers) and 12.2.2 (exchange of customs information).
- (ii) Implementation notifications: Developing and least-developed country Members using the special flexibilities under Section II of the Agreement are required to notify their implementation commitments to the Committee.
- (iii) Technical assistance and capacity building (TACB) notifications: Article 16 requires that Members provide 3 notifications: notification by Members of TACB requirements for implementation of their category C designations; notification of information on arrangements entered into with donors; and notification of progress in TACB provision.

### 2.2 Experience sharing sessions

2.2. From its earliest meetings in 2017, the Committee recognized that information sharing was going to be an important part of the CTF's work. The sessions were envisioned as a Member-driven, proposal-based approach where Members could put forward their TFA Section I implementation experiences with either a thematic focus or looking at specific provisions.

2.3. The first experience-sharing session took place at the Committee meeting of 2-3 May 2018. Since then, experience-sharing has remained a standing item on the agenda of regular Committee meetings. The session is held in informal mode. Presentations are made by Members, by Members and supporting development partners, or by development partners alone. The Committee has heard over 100 presentations between 2017 and 2022.

#### 2.2.1 Dedicated session on assistance and capacity building support

2.4. Article 21.4 of the TFA provides that the Committee shall hold at least one dedicated session per year to: (a) discuss any problems regarding implementation of provisions of the TFA; (b) review progress in the provision of assistance and support for capacity building to support the implementation of the TFA, including any developing or LDC Members not receiving adequate assistance and support for capacity building; (c) share experiences and information on ongoing assistance and support for capacity building and implementation programs, including challenges and successes; (d) review donor notifications as set forth in Article 22 of the TFA; and (e) review the operation of Article 21 of the TFA.

2.5. The first dedicated session was held on 3 May 2018 which established the practice of holding the dedicated session back-to-back with the regular autumn Committee meeting.

#### 2.2.2 Trade concerns

2.6. The Committee addressed one matter concerning a specific trade concern that was raised at its meeting of 11 February 2020.<sup>3</sup> The Kyrgyz Republic raised a concern regarding Kazakhstan's treatment of its goods transiting to the Russian Federation. Kazakhstan considered that the issue should be addressed within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, to which they both are members.

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<sup>3</sup> [G/L/1375](#) and [G/TFA/M/10](#).

### **2.2.3 Reports by the Secretariat**

2.7. The Secretariat updates the informal reminder document (G/TFA/INF/1/Rev./xxx) on an annual basis.

### **2.3 Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility**

2.8. The Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF or the Facility) was launched in late 2014 and began its operations in support of the ratification process and before the establishment of the Committee. Since the Committee's inception in 2017, it engaged in discussions to clarify the operational structure of the TFAF and intended interaction between the Committee, WTO Secretariat, and TFAF.<sup>4</sup> At the Committee's meeting of 9-11 October 2018, the Committee considered an agenda item on the administrative separation between the TFAF and the Committee on Trade Facilitation.<sup>5</sup> At the Committee's meeting of 25-26 June 2019, the Committee requested the TFAF address how it worked in line with the Paris and Busan principles on aid effectiveness.<sup>6</sup>

2.9. In 2021, the Committee began discussions regarding the TFAF guidelines which sought to further clarify who directs the activities and functions of TFAF as well as to ensure transparency concerning proposed activities and grants. At the Committee meeting of 22-23 April 2021, the United States submitted a proposal calling for the TFAF to fall under the purview and direction of the Committee as a means to ensure that Committee oversight, direction, and responsibility will provide transparency on the TFAF activities being undertaken, the funding of the TFAF, and transparency on Member's assistance provided by the TFAF.<sup>7</sup> The Committee agreed at its meeting of 22-23 April 2021 that the Chairperson would hold consultations in an effort to resolve the moratorium on technical assistance elements of the TFAF's activities.<sup>8</sup>

2.10. The Chairperson held eight<sup>9</sup> rounds of consultations, four of which in open-ended format, and the remainder were small-group meetings. The participating Members including the United States, came to an agreement, endorsed by the Committee to allow TFAF to resume technical assistance and capacity building activities for Members. As a result, an on-line activity request form for submission to the TFAF, and enhancements to transparency through a tracker dashboard were developed which offers interested Committee Members the ability to monitor the follow-up to these requests in real-time. Throughout 2022, Committee Members reviewed the operation of this activity request system, considered possible improvements, and returned to its discussion on a form of guidance from the Committee to set out its relationship with the TFAF.

2.11. At its meeting of 4-5 April 2022, the Committee adopted a Framework for the Management and Operation of the Facility.<sup>10</sup> The new framework takes account of the evolution of the needs of Members as expressed through the Committee. The Framework is intended to supplement the provisions of the 2015 Operational Guidelines which had been developed in 2015, prior to the entry into force of the Agreement.

2.12. The TFAF provides regular reports on its activities to each Committee meeting.<sup>11</sup> These include updates on its grant program, as well as recent and upcoming technical assistance workshops and other events relating to trade facilitation matters organized at the request of Members and Member-groupings with donors, partner organizations and representatives from the private sector. The Facility further provides annual workplans and annual reports to the Committee. These documents and all other information relating to its grant work, coordination efforts with the Annex D+ partner organizations and all other activities can be found on the TFAF website.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [G/TFA/M/2](#).

<sup>5</sup> [G/TFA/M/6](#).

<sup>6</sup> [G/TFA/M/8](#).

<sup>7</sup> [G/TFA/W/36](#).

<sup>8</sup> [G/TFA/W/64](#).

<sup>9</sup> 20 May, 9 June, 7 July, 28 July, 15 September, 1 October, 14 October.

<sup>10</sup> [G/TFA/3](#).

<sup>11</sup> See [G/L/1201](#), [G/L/1267](#), [G/L/1329](#), and [G/L/1375](#). The most recent reports by the Facility to the Committee can be found at [G/TFA/W/28](#) (20-21 October 2020), [G/TFA/W/37](#) (22-23 April 2021) and [G/TFA/W/66](#) (19-21 October 2021).

<sup>12</sup> TFAF – Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (<http://www.tfafacility.org>).

### **2.3.1 Participation by external stakeholders**

2.13. In accordance with the Committee's Rules of Procedures, representatives of international intergovernmental organizations may attend the meetings as observers on the invitation of the Committee. The Committee may also invite representatives of other international organizations with competence in the field of trade facilitation or their subsidiary bodies to attend meetings of the Committee and discuss specific matters related to the implementation of this Agreement. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, as a joint subsidiary organ of the WTO and UNCTAD, is not required to formally submit a request for observer status in the WTO bodies and is invited as appropriate to attend those meetings it wishes to attend.<sup>13</sup>

2.14. In practice, at the end of every regular meeting of the Committee, it agrees to extend an invitation to "Annex D" organizations (IMF, OECD, UNCTAD, WCO and World Bank Group) to participate in the following Committee meeting. At the meeting of 12-13 February 2019, at the request of a delegation, the invitation was extended to a representative from the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GTAf). The invitation has been extended at every meeting since then.

2.15. In addition, the Annex D partner organizations provided reports that were circulated to the Committee in the context of the dedicated sessions on assistance and capacity building that took place on 20-22 October 2020<sup>14</sup> and 19-21 October 2021.<sup>15</sup> The Annex D partners and the ITC also provided a report to the Committee for the 22-23 April 2021 meeting that, with respect to each organization, outlined their role in supporting implementation of the TFA, offered a brief description of upcoming assistance and activities, and described how Members could request assistance.<sup>16</sup>

### **2.3.2 Involvement of the private sector**

2.16. There is currently no formal involvement of the private sector in the Committee. A proposal to formalize engagement with the private sector was made during the 2021 TFA review process, which did not reach consensus at the time. The proposal remains under consideration by the Committee and can be placed on a Committee meeting agenda by the proponent.

2.17. On 22 April 2021, at the margins of the meeting of the CTF, the Global Express Association (GEA), which represents DHL, FedEx and UPS, organized a webinar to which the Committee was invited.

### **2.3.3 Programming of Committee meetings**

2.18. During consultations with Members, there was a request that the Committee would receive a preliminary agenda approximately three weeks prior to the session. These practices have continued since then.

### **2.4 Assistance to delegates**

2.19. There is no systematic training programme for Geneva-based delegates concerning the TFA. The Secretariat regularly provides bilateral assistance upon request (via email, in person or by virtual meetings) to Members in the processing of their notifications and their requests for technical assistance activities.

2.20. Upon request, the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility provides technical assistance and capacity building to developing and LDC Members on a national and regional basis, relating to the implementation of the Agreement, including their participation in the TF Committee. Until the imposition of travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, capital-based trade facilitation experts were supported by the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility to attend the annual dedicated session on assistance and capacity building.

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<sup>13</sup> [WT/GC/M/25](#), item 1.

<sup>14</sup> [G/TFA/W/29](#).

<sup>15</sup> [G/TFA/W/67](#).

<sup>16</sup> [G/TFA/W/39](#).

#### **2.4.1 Digital tools used for Committee work**

##### **2.4.1.1 TFA notification database**

2.21. The TFA database – [tfadatabase.org](http://tfadatabase.org) – was created in response to a request expressed by Members in the CTF in 2017. The database is a fact-based source of reference information on TFA notifications, which also provides analytical functionalities. It has followed the timeline of the TFA and continually adapted to accommodate new notification data. Accordingly, it was significantly revised in 2022 to reflect the current stage of TFA implementation and the data and analytical needs of Members.

2.22. In addition to the Member profiles, the database now includes profiles for Member groupings, regions and economic communities and TFA measures, which provides a platform to monitor the notification and implementation status of groups of Members and TFA measures in a consolidated manner. All notifications and communications documents, as well as experience-sharing presentations, can be accessed on these pages.

2.23. The TFA database hosts a dedicated page on the Committee which contains all the information provided under the experience-sharing and thematic discussions. All technical assistance disbursements provided by Members can also be viewed on the TFA database. The TFA database automatically feeds data to three other websites, comprising the main WTO website, the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility website, and the Global Trade Helpdesk website.

##### **2.4.1.2 Other digital tools**

2.24. The CTF makes use of the general WTO-wide digital tools, such as [e-registration](#) and the "[e-subscription](#)" option in [Documents online](#). E-registration allows Members to indicate their contact information as well as the different Committees that are covered by each delegate. The Secretariat and other delegations can use the information provided in this system to identify delegates covering the CTF and to e-mail communications and other documents. The E-subscription function in Documents Online allows delegates to indicate the Committees and other bodies that they follow and to receive daily alerts by e-mail every time that a new document has been issued, including those by the CTG.

#### **2.4.2 Planning and organization of meetings**

2.25. The Committee holds three formal meetings per year – two during the first half of the year and one before the end of the year – and it holds informal meetings as required. To the extent possible, these formal meetings are organized in coordination with the meetings of other subsidiary bodies of the Council for Trade in Goods.

#### **2.4.3 Formal meetings**

##### **2.4.3.1 Communication before meetings**

2.26. The Chairperson informs the Committee of the meeting dates at the autumn Committee meeting for the following year.

2.27. Ahead of each meeting, a convening notice and a draft preliminary agenda are circulated approximately four weeks prior to the meeting. The convening notice identifies the closing date for inclusion of items by Members on the agenda, which is usually 12 days before the meeting. A final agenda is circulated 10 days prior to the meeting.

##### **2.4.3.2 Number of meetings**

2.28. Since 2019, there have been 18 formal meetings and 11 informal meetings (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Number of formal and informal meetings**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Formal meeting<br/>(number and duration)</b> | <b>Informal meetings<br/>(number and duration)</b> | <b>Other (e.g. workshops,<br/>symposia, etc.)</b> |
|-------------|---|--|---|
| <b>2019</b> | 3 (2 days)                                      | -  | -   |
| <b>2020</b> | 4 (1-3 days)                                    | 1 (0.5 days)                                       | -   |
| <b>2021</b> | 7 (1-3 days)                                    | 8 (0.5 days)                                       | -   |
| <b>2022</b> | 4 (1-3 days)                                    | 2 (0.5 days)                                       | 1 (Anniversary Event)                             |

**2.4.3.3 Preparation of Airgrams and Agendas**

2.29. The Secretariat issues a draft Airgram which is circulated by approximately 30 days before the date of the meeting through the WTO/AIR/TFA/ document series. This draft Airgram includes the standing agenda items, including notifications circulated, and all other known information as of the date of circulation.

2.30. A final version, including the addition of requested agenda items and documents, is issued at least 10 days before the date of the meeting (WTO/AIR/TFA/XXX/Rev.1).

2.31. Additional agenda items are added depending on when the meeting is taking place. Specifically, an agenda item "Election of the Chairperson" is added at the spring meeting, as is the dedicated session on transit. The agenda for the dedicated session on assistance and capacity building support is circulated with the agenda for the regular Autumn meeting. An agenda item "Draft annual report to the CTG" is also added at the autumn meeting.

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

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Date of formal meeting</b>  | <b>Date of circulation of Airgram</b> | <b>No. of days before the meeting</b> |
|-------------|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>2019</b> | 12-13 February<br><br>25-26 June<br>15-16 October  | 23 January (Draft)                    | 20                                    |
|             |  | 1 February (Final)                    | 11                                    |
|             |  | 14 June (Final)                       | 11                                    |
|             |  | 29 July (Draft)                       | 78                                    |
|             | 4 October (Final)  |                                       | 11                                    |
| <b>2020</b> | 11-12 February<br><br>20 February<br>28 February<br>20-22 October  | 13 Dec 2019 (Draft)                   | 60                                    |
|             |  | 31 January (Final)                    | 11                                    |
|             |  | 18 February (Final)                   | 2                                     |
|             |  | 25 February (Final)                   | 3                                     |
|             |  | 14 August (Draft)                     | 67                                    |
|             | 9 October (Final)  |                                       | 11                                    |
| <b>2021</b> | 26-27 January<br><br>3-4 March<br><br>22-23 April<br><br>22-23 June<br><br>19-20 July<br><br>19-21 October | 11 January (Draft)                    | 15                                    |
|             |  | 15 January (Final)                    | 11                                    |
|             |  | 10 February (Draft)                   | 21                                    |
|             |  | 19 February (Final)                   | 12                                    |
|             |  | 30 March (Draft)                      | 23                                    |
|             |  | 9 April (Final)                       | 13                                    |
|             |  | 27 May (Draft)                        | 26                                    |
|             |  | 11 June (Final)                       | 11                                    |
|             |  | 1 July (Draft)                        | 18                                    |
|             |  | 9 July (Final)                        | 10                                    |
| <b>2022</b> | 26 November<br><br>4-5 April<br><br>30 June<br><br>15 August<br><br>28-29 November                         | 27 September (Draft)                  | 22                                    |
|             |  | 8 October (Final)                     | 11                                    |
|             |  | 24 November (Final)                   | 2                                     |
|             |  | 24 March (Draft)                      | 11                                    |
|             |  | 25 March (Final)                      | 10                                    |

#### **2.4.3.4 Distribution of documents prior to meetings**

2.32. The distribution of formal documents, including notifications are circulated in the order in which they are received by the Secretariat and the WTO Central Registry of Notifications (CRN), following verification by the Secretariat.

2.33. The circulation of draft annual reports is done immediately after the closure of the agenda of the last meeting of the year, to make sure that all the documents that were received on the date of the closure of the agenda are included in the draft reports. The Chairperson informs the Committee of any Members' notifications received after the closing of the agenda and that they will be on the agenda of the following meeting.

2.34. All documents relevant to a meeting are added to the "Documents for Meetings" in the WTO webpage (i.e. under the link for the meeting in the calendar), which is sourced from Documents Online (i.e. under "Documents for Meetings", topic: Trade Facilitation). Delegates subscribed to the Committee on Trade Facilitation under the "e-subscriptions" option of Documents Online are alerted via e-mail daily on all new relevant documents issued.

#### **2.4.3.5 Communication after meetings**

2.35. The Chairperson does not normally send a follow-up communication after the formal meetings. The news item of the regular meetings is prepared by external relations, which provides a list of key issues discussed which is posted on the WTO website.

#### **2.4.3.6 Preparation of the minutes**

2.36. The Secretariat prepares minutes after every formal meeting, which capture all information - reports by the Chairperson, Members' statements, and reactions to these statements – shared at the formal meeting.

2.37. The minutes of a formal meeting of the Committee also contain information on informal meeting(s) held since the previous formal meeting. This is generally done by means of a summary of the informal meeting prepared under the responsibility of the Chairperson and read at the formal meeting. The Chairperson also reports to the formal meeting on any consultations that they have held.

2.38. The preparation of the minutes start with written statements received by the Secretariat, as well as the statements by the Chairperson, being inserted into an initial draft in the appropriate places. The Secretariat proceeds to type the statements from the audio recording of each meeting. 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 as appropriate. The minutes, as of 2021 use the direct voice narrative to provide greater accuracy to the records. Edited draft minutes are then submitted for approval by the Divisional Director. Once approved, the English language version of the minutes is circulated to Members. The English language version is then translated into French and Spanish language versions, a process that can take several months. In case of error in the issued minutes, or upon request of a Member, a corrigendum may be circulated.

2.39. Once the minutes are circulated, and pursuant to Paragraph 2(c) of the WTO's Procedures for Circulation and Derestriction of WTO Documents (WT/L/452), they remain restricted in documents online (DOL) for 45 days. The minutes become automatically derestricted 45 days after the date of circulation.

**Table 3: Preparation of the Minutes<sup>17</sup>**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Last date of the formal meeting</b> | <b>Date of circulation of the minutes</b> | <b>No. of pages</b> | <b>No. of days</b> |
|-------------|--|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>2019</b> | 12-13 February                         | 25 June                                   | 28                  | 133                |
|             | 25-26 June                             | 2 October                                 | 22                  | 99                 |
|             | 15-16 October                          | 3 March                                   | 45                  | 140                |
| <b>2020</b> | 11 February                            | 15 June                                   | 39                  | 125                |
|             | 20 February                            | 11 August                                 | 10                  | 173                |
|             | 28 February                            | 11 August                                 | 5                   | 165                |
|             | 20-22 October                          | 21 December                               | 42                  | 62                 |
| <b>2021</b> | 26-27 January                          | 9 June                                    | 28                  | 134                |
|             | 3-4 March                              | 2 August                                  | 32                  | 152                |
|             | 22-23 April                            | 5 August                                  | 34                  | 105                |
|             | 22-23 June                             | 24 November                               | 33                  | 152                |
|             | 19-20 July                             | 7 December                                | 10                  | 141                |
|             | 19-21 October                          | -   | -                   | -                  |
|             | 26 November                            | -   | -                   | -                  |

#### **2.4.4 Informal meetings**

2.40. Informal meetings are convened through a communication that is sent to the official e-mail addresses of all Members<sup>18</sup>, as well as the delegates that have identified as covering the Committee in the e-registration system.

2.41. The convening email contains information on the meeting date, time, location, purpose, and the proposed agenda. In 2021, the Committee convened in informal mode on nine occasions. On five of those occasions, the topic of the informal discussion was the TFA review. The topic was included in the agenda of the formal meeting but was carried out in informal mode. As a result, the informal meetings were convened at the same time as the regular meeting. The convening e-mail has been sent on average three weeks in advance (Table 4).

**Table 4: Convening of informal meetings**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Date of informal meeting</b> | <b>Date of communication convening the informal meeting</b> | <b>No. of days</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| <b>2019</b> | -                               | -   | -                  |
| <b>2020</b> | 30 September                    | 15 September  | 15                 |
| <b>2021</b> | 13 January                      | 18 December   | 26                 |
|             | 26 February                     | 22 February   | 4                  |
|             | 3 March                         | 10 February (Draft)   | 21                 |
|             |                                 | 19 February (Final)   | 12                 |
|             | 22 April                        | 30 March (Draft)  | 23                 |
|             |                                 | 9 April (Final)   | 13                 |
|             | 22 June                         | 27 May (Draft)  | 26                 |
|             |                                 | 11 June (Final)   | 11                 |
|             | 19 July                         | 1 July (Draft)  | 18                 |
|             |                                 | 9 July (Final)  | 10                 |
|             | 22 September                    | 21 September  | 1                  |
|             | 13 October                      | 28 September  | 15                 |
|             | 19 October                      | 27 September (Draft)  | 22                 |
|             |                                 | 08 October (Final)  | 11                 |
| <b>2022</b> | 11 February                     | 2 February  | 9                  |
|             | 3 March                         | 3 February  | 28                 |

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

2.42. The CTF does not interact with other Committees or WTO bodies on a regular basis.

<sup>17</sup> The meetings for 2022 were exceptionally delayed.

<sup>18</sup> The list of official e-mail addresses is maintained by the Council and Trade Negotiations Division.

## **2.6 Ad hoc events organized by the Committee**

2.43. A TFA commemorative event, entitled "From Vision to Reality – and to the Future" was held on 2 June 2017 to mark the entry into force of the Agreement.

2.44. A TFA 5-Year Anniversary Event was organized by the Committee and took place on 30 June 2022. The process of organizing the event started with an invitation to the Committee for suggested topics and format of the event. There followed a number of informal small-group consultations on the development of the programme and identification of speakers. Four drafts of the programme were circulated between the latest draft including identified speakers. A number of Members participated in the sessions as presenters and panelists. The event was opened by Deputy Director-General Gonzalez. A webpage was created for the event which was also live-streamed on the [WTO Youtube channel](#).

## **3 EVOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE'S PRACTICES IN FUNCTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE OF THE TFA**

3.1. In March 2018, the Chairperson held an open-ended informal consultation to set the parameters for subsequent Committee work with regard to three areas: (i) scheduling of the Committee's meetings; (ii) identifying the Committee's work programme/agenda; and (iii) participation by international organizations in the Committee meetings.

3.2. By the Committee's meeting of 2-3 May 2018, building on comments raised by delegations during Committee meetings and based on the outcome of consultations, the agenda had evolved to comprise a number of standing items, as follows: (i) matters relating to the implementation and administration of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, starting with notifications presented since the last meeting, followed by an update on the state of the ratification and notification processes; (ii) experience sharing and thematic discussions, where delegations were invited to share their TFA implementation experiences with a thematic or provision-based focus; and (iii) updates on recent and upcoming activities. These items have continued as standing agenda items for each subsequent meeting.

3.3. The Committee's practices were further revised when the Committee carried out the first four-year Review of the operation and implementation of the TFA in accordance with Article 23.1.6 which states: "The Committee shall review the operation and implementation of this Agreement four years from its entry into force, and periodically thereafter."

3.4. The review took stock of Members' progress in implementing the Agreement from 2017 to 2021 and identified a number of means by which the CTF can strengthen its work to support full implementation of the TFA. The review contained the following decisions and recommendations related to Committee work, which have been implemented as of 2022:

1) Additions to the Committee meeting agenda:

- a. A new standing agenda item for Members to provide updates on overdue Section I and Section II notifications;
- b. A new standing agenda item "Status of Definitive Date Implementation" directly following the existing agenda item "Status of Notifications and Ratifications";
  - i. which comprised a review, on a regular basis, the effectiveness of a reminder document of definitive implementation dates prepared by the WTO Secretariat and of the voluntary interventions by Members referenced under point 1) above. A new document series G/TFA/INF/1/REV.XX<sup>19</sup> was established to collate this information on upcoming definitive dates for implementation and to facilitate Members wishing to request extensions thereon under Article 17 of the Agreement.

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<sup>19</sup> G/TFA/M/16.

- c. An agenda item for Members whose implementation dates have passed for their category B or C provisions, and on a voluntary basis and for informational purposes only, to share information regarding the implementation;
- d. An agenda item "Follow-up to the four-year review" for the purpose of continuing discussions, at the request of proponents, on the proposals that remain under consideration by the CTF from this review.

2) One standing item removed from the agenda:

- a. Removed as a standing item, reviews of notifications under Article 15, while noting that the relevant notifications could review new Article 15 notifications on an ad hoc basis.

3) Developed an agenda with standing topics for the Committee's annual dedicated session on assistance and capacity building.

4) Amended the agenda of the Committee's spring meeting to include a dedicated session on transit. The session is organized by the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC) led by the Coordinator of the Group, a role currently held by Botswana. The first session took place during the 4-5 April 2022 regular meeting of the Committee. Landlocked developing country (LLDC) members Kazakhstan, Bolivia and Malawi made presentations. The session also heard presentations from the WTO Secretariat, UNCTAD, WCO and ITU. H.E. Dr Adamu Mohammed Abdulhamid, Chairperson of the CTF made the concluding remarks.

5) Other work practices that were introduced or modified or strengthened as a result of the review:

- a. Requested that the Secretariat, on an annual basis, check for broken weblinks provided in notifications under Article 1.4 and request the relevant Members to update them as required;
  - b. Recommended that notifications be circulated as far in advance of Committee meetings as possible in order to promote meaningful review and comment from Members;
  - c. Recommended that CTF meetings continue in hybrid mode;
  - d. Agreed to conduct a second review of the operation and implementation of the Agreement in 2026, and periodically thereafter.
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