

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Committee on Trade and Environment

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REQUEST FOR OBSERVER STATUS BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The following communication, dated 18 April 2001, has been received from the Executive Director of the External Relations and Governing Bodies of the World Health Organization (WHO) requesting observer status for the WHO in the Committee on Trade and Environment. The original letter and the supporting document can be consulted in Office 3025, Centre William Rappard.

The World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization have developed an institutional dialogue over several years which has materialized in the observer status granted to WHO by the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade, and the Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

More recently, a dialogue has been established between both Organizations on the consistency of multilateral health agreements, negotiated under the aegis of WHO and WTO rules. Implementation of guidelines to promote and protect public health requires that all aspects of trade agreements are considered. These international standards and protective measures designed to protect consumers' health are very relevant to the human environment.

In view of the prominence of environmental concerns on the health agenda, WHO wishes to apply for observer status in the Committee on Trade and Environment in order that a representative may attend meetings of the Committee when it debates items of interest to the health sector. The World Health Organization would thus be in a better position to meet the requirements of its Member States in this regard.

I attach the publication *Basic Documents*, which contains information on the nature of WHO's work and of its membership (WHO's Constitution, chapters II and III), and a list of Members (Appendix I). Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly and Rule 4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board contain the provisions for reciprocity.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.
