

WTO COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE
TRADE FACILITATION RELATED TO THE TBT AGREEMENT

(As requested by the Council for Trade in Goods)

..... Attached is a draft note concerning "Trade Facilitation related to the TBT Agreement" of which the Chairman of the Committee intends to submit to the Chairman of the Council for Trade in Goods. The issue will be discussed at the Committee meeting to be held on 20 November 1998.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED
G/TBT/SPEC/8
17 November 1998

(98-4591)

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

DRAFT

1. The objective of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade is to minimize technical barriers to trade. The text of the Agreement recognizes the importance of trade facilitation. It is reflected, for example, in the provisions related to non-discrimination, the avoidance of unnecessary obstacles of trade, encouragement of harmonization, the concept of equivalence, mutual recognition and transparency.
2. In accordance with Article 13.1 of the Agreement, each Member has the opportunity of consulting in the Committee any matters relating to the operation of the Agreement to the furtherance of its objective. At each regular meeting, the Committee hears statements on the implementation and administration of the Agreement. Measures have been brought to the attention of the Committee by Members who raise concerns about the potential adverse trade effects or inconsistency with the Agreement of those measures. Under Article 15.2 of the Agreement, Members have informed the Committee of measures taken to ensure the implementation and administration of the Agreement.
3. Article 15.4 of the Agreement provides that the Committee review the operation and implementation of the Agreement every three-years. The First Triennial Review was conducted at the end of 1997. The Committee reiterated the importance of the prevention and elimination of technical barriers to trade and the essential role of the Agreement in furthering these objectives. The Committee noted however, that certain difficulties or problems existed in a number of areas regarding the operation and implementation of the Agreement (G/TBT/5). The Committee started its programme of work arising from the First Triennial Review at the beginning of 1998. This is providing Members further opportunities to hold discussions on elements in relation to trade facilitation.
4. To conclude, the provisions of the TBT Agreement are by their very nature relevant to trade facilitation. Issues related to this matter have therefore been a regular feature of the work of the TBT Committee. They are being addressed regularly, in particular, under the agenda item "Statements on Implementation and Administration of the Agreement". In the light of this, the TBT Committee does not consider it necessary to add an additional agenda item entitled "Trade Facilitation" as part of its regular agenda.
