

## Committee on Trade and Environment

### IMPROVING THE TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT PAGES OF THE WTO WEBSITE

#### Item 10 of the Work Programme

#### Note by the Secretariat

1. The intention of this Note is to inform Members of the improvements which are in the process of being made to the Internet website of the WTO, with specific reference to work relevant to the trade and environment interface, and the discussions and documents in the CTE. This is part of the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to improve transparency and make it easier for the public to obtain correct information about the WTO. Much of this information is already available but not necessarily easy to find or digest.

#### **I. IMPROVING THE WTO'S WEBSITE**

2. The WTO Internet website has emerged as an efficient and effective tool for providing factual information about activities in the WTO. Efforts are now under way to make further improvements to the entire WTO website, in order to facilitate navigation, and make the material easier to reach and understand. The intention is to make the website more easily accessible to a public with little knowledge of WTO subjects, Agreements or activities, while at the same time containing sufficiently detailed information to meet the needs of users from WTO Member Governments, other intergovernmental organizations and more specialized members of the public. Another aim is to set up the pages of information in such a way that users save time looking for the information they need. The Trade and Environment Division and the Information and Media Relations Division are in the process of compiling documentation for the new trade and environment pages on the website. The target date to have it available in all three official WTO languages is by the end of April 2000.

3. The easiest way to reach the trade and environment section will be by going to [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org), staying with English, or switching to French or Spanish, and clicking on "trade topics", "sujets" or "Temas Comerciales" respectively. Unless notified otherwise, the direct addresses will be:

[www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/envir\\_e/envir\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/envir_e/envir_e.htm)

[www.wto.org/french/tratop\\_f/envir\\_f/envir\\_f.htm](http://www.wto.org/french/tratop_f/envir_f/envir_f.htm)

[www.wto.org/spanish/tratop\\_s/envir\\_s/envir\\_s.htm](http://www.wto.org/spanish/tratop_s/envir_s/envir_s.htm)

4. Information covered in these pages will range from a history of the CTE and its agenda to a section on environment-related trade disputes in the WTO. There will also be a section containing the *Trade and Environment Bulletins* and one with frequently asked questions in the trade and environment area. All the information will be presented to make it easier for those with little knowledge of the WTO to learn more about the Organization, the manner in which trade and environmental issues have been brought into the discussions, and the work of the CTE. The website pages relating to trade and environment should, however, not lose their appeal for those seeking a

more detailed discussion of this subject matter in the WTO. Information will also be available concerning past WTO symposia on trade and environment.

## **II. RECENT STATISTICS**

5. Overall, visits to the WTO's website have been steadily increasing. The number of individual users of the WTO website increased again in November 1999 in the run-up to the WTO's 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Conference in Seattle, reaching a record level of 361,708 individual users from 171 countries. This represents an increase in users of 80 per cent over the previous month, and an increase of about 160 per cent in comparison to November 1998. The figure of 361,708 is an absolute minimum due to the fact that any number of users coming to the WTO site from behind a network firewall are all counted as a single user. The average length of individual user sessions has remained stable at about 14 minutes.

6. The volume of information, data and documents downloaded from the site during November saw an increase to a total of 131,623 megabytes. (By comparison, there were 201,101 individual users in October 1999, who downloaded 88,000 megabytes of information and documents.) One megabyte is the equivalent of about 1 million pages of text.

7. In November 1999, the trade and environment pages of the website received 9,377 visitors. The WTO Secretariat's *Special Study on Trade and Environment* remained at the top of the list of files consulted by users in November, with 7,776 copies downloaded. In October 1999, when this Study was released, 21,658 copies of various parts of the Study were downloaded.

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