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Page: 1/2

Committee on Rules of Origin

**REPORT ON IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF
THE COMMITTEE ON RULES OF ORIGIN**

REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report is being prepared by the Committee on Rules of Origin (CRO) at the request of the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG) ([JOB/CTG/29](#) and [JOB/CTG/33](#)). Its objective is to update the Council on the recent discussions on measures to improve the functioning of the CRO. This report complements the information contained in a previous report prepared by the Chairperson in December 2022 ([G/RO/W/217](#); [G/L/1465](#); [G/L/1465/Corr.1](#); [JOB/CTG/19/Rev.2](#) and [G/C/W/824/Rev.1](#)).

2 PROCESS AND PROPOSALS

2.1. Members held discussions on possible measures to improve the functioning and work of the CRO since June 2022. Such discussions took place through a written process ([JOB/RO/9](#); [JOB/RO/9/Rev.1](#) and [JOB/RO/9/Rev.2](#)) as well as during the formal CRO meeting of 6 June 2023 (item 4 in [G/RO/M/80](#)).

2.2. Different measures to improve the work and functioning of the CRO were considered. Some of these measures have been suggested by Members in the context of the work of the CTG for consideration of its subsidiary bodies ([JOB/CTG/27](#)) while other measures were suggested by some Members during the formal meeting of the CRO of 6 June 2023.

2.3. Some of the measures considered concern WTO-wide reforms and improvements and, as a result, did not require any specific follow-up by the CRO. Other measures concerned specifically the work of the Committee. The following section enumerates and describes the measures which have been agreed to and introduced since December 2022.

2.4. In light of these communications and discussions at the CRO, I would like to report that the following seven measures are being implemented immediately, namely, that the Secretariat should:

3 IMPROVEMENTS ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEE

3.1. As a result of these discussions, the Committee agreed to implement seven changes with a view to improving its functioning, including seven where formal decisions were taken the Committee and seven where the Secretariat was requested to introduce changes to the way in which it supports the work of the Committee.

3.2. The improvements included or to be included in the work of the Committee include:

General area	Improvements in the functioning of the CRO
A. Assistance to delegates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Organize periodic introductory sessions about the use of rules of origin in international trade, the related WTO instruments and update on the different pillars of work of the CRO;Prepare a manual describing the main procedural and substantive aspects of the work of the CRO. This manual has

General area	Improvements in the functioning of the CRO
	already been created and is available in a dedicated section of the Rules of Origin Portal of the WTO website describing the functioning of the CRO (available to authorized users only)
B. Planning and organization of meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematically hyperlink the documents cited in airgrams, reports and any other documents circulated to Members; • Introduction of an e-Agenda in the context of the CRO; • Maintain the hybrid format of meetings (in person and remote) unless there is a WTO wide decision to the contrary. • Circulate any oral reports by the Chairperson or the Secretariat, particularly during informal meetings, and which may provide useful information for delegations
C. Conduct of formal meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate an annotated agenda ahead of formal meetings of the CRO describing each agenda item and providing relevant background to help the preparation by delegations
E. Digital tools used by the Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce an e-Agenda in the context of the CRO.

4 NEXT STEPS

4.1. The Committee will continue to consider measures to improve its functioning on an ongoing basis as proposed by delegations and as relevant.