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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

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OIML ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE TBT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR LEGAL METROLOGY

This document contains the statement delivered by the OIML at the TBT Committee meeting of 15-16 June 2016 under Agenda Item 5 (Update by Observers).

The following recent activities of the OIML are of particular interest to the TBT Committee:

1 MEMBERSHIP

1. The OIML is very pleased welcome Thailand as its latest new Member State, bringing the total number of OIML Member States to 61, but reducing the number of Corresponding Members to 62. Thailand has been a Corresponding Member for many years, and the transfer to Member State indicates both the growing importance of legal metrology in Thailand, as well as their willingness to participate more actively in the future work of the OIML.

2 INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA (SOLAS) REGULATIONS

2. As reported at the last two TBT Committee meetings, the OIML has become involved in implementation issues resulting from the requirement to weigh all shipping containers before loading onto ships under an amendment to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention Chapter VI Regulation 2, by the International Maritime Organisation.

3. The revised SOLAS regulations require shippers to provide a "verified gross mass" for all containers in time for this value to be taken into account in the loading plan of the ship on which it will be carried. This "*verified gross mass*" must be obtained using "*certified and calibrated weighing equipment*" which meets the "*applicable accuracy standards and requirements of the State in which the equipment is being used according to national legislation*". Since there is no requirement in the SOLAS regulations for this national legislation to be based on applicable international standards, there is a huge potential for the creation of significant technical barriers to trade if different requirements are applied in different countries, especially considering that there are around 35-37 million containers in use worldwide. The OIML is therefore actively promoting the use of its International Recommendations as the basis for requirements to meet the SOLAS regulations, since they are already used world-wide as the basis for trade legislation covering weighing equipment.

4. Having attended an industry-led seminar on this subject on 1 June, it is clear that although there has been a significant improvement in awareness and readiness since the end of 2015, many port operators, shippers, and governments are still poorly prepared for the implementation deadline of 1 July 2016. The IMO has made it clear that the only exemptions from the new regulations will cover containers already at sea which will be trans-shipped after the deadline of 1 July.

5. The OIML therefore continues to encourage its own, as well as WTO members to look into how the SOLAS regulations are being implemented in their countries, since lack of preparation or inconsistent application could lead to a chaotic situation following 1 July 2016, with huge numbers of containers potentially being refused entry to ports or loading onto ships.
