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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

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EIGHTH SPECIAL MEETING ON PROCEDURES FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE

8 NOVEMBER 2016

REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON TO THE TBT COMMITTEE¹

This Report was delivered by Chairperson to the WTO TBT Committee at the meeting of 10-11 November 2016.

1. I will now provide a brief oral report of Tuesday's Eighth Special Meeting on Procedures for Information Exchange. A more detailed summary of the Eighth Special Meeting will be included in the minutes of this formal Committee meeting.

2. We witnessed the launch of **ePing**, a new global alert mechanism for TBT and SPS notifications, put together jointly by the WTO, ITC and UNDESA. This notification alert mechanism finds its origins in the mandate given to this Committee in the 7th Triennial Review.² ePing facilitates businesses, especially SMEs, in meeting TBT and SPS requirements by enhancing transparency.

3. We considered three broad themes – the first being **online tools**. We heard from the Secretariat about the functionalities of e-Ping; the Secretariat's ongoing work in modernising the TBT-IMS; and the gradual uptake of submitting TBT notifications through the TBT-NSS. I encouraged Members to utilise and take full advantage of these online tools. We also heard from several Members on their experiences in utilising e-Ping; and leveraging online tools and technology to involve stakeholders in the process of gathering, disseminating, tracking and responding to TBT notifications.

4. The second theme dealt with **internal coordination and handling of comments**. Members shared experiences on how their enquiry points operate; and on technical assistance/capacity building programmes provided to enquiry points and notification authorities. We also heard experiences from Members benefitting from such capacity building activities. The importance of establishing a clear internal coordination structure, educating regulators, keeping an up-to-date contact list of regulators and sharing experiences between regulatory authorities was highlighted. The Secretariat reported on the progress made on the Guide for Enquiry Points. To that end, I encouraged Members to respond to the Secretariat's Enquiry Point Survey, as the information gathered would be the basis on which Secretariat would develop the Guide for Enquiry Points.

5. Finally, on **transparency in standard-setting**, we heard from a Member on follow-up actions taken in response to the 7th Triennial Review recommendation in this area; as well as an update from the Secretariat on the WTO/ISO Information Services. I encourage Members to visit the WTO/ISO Information Services website³ and to provide feedback, if any, to the WTO and ISO.

6. In all, it was a valuable and informative session – one that underlined the importance of transparency as one of the key tenets of the TBT Agreement and the TBT Committee.

¹ A summary of the Special Meeting will be contained in the annex to the minutes (forthcoming).

² On on-line tools, Members agreed to "request the Secretariat to explore the development of an export alert system for TBT notifications, in cooperation with other organizations" (G/TBT/37, para. 5.12).

³ <https://tbtcode.iso.org>