COMMUNICATION FROM THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES

The delegation of the United States has requested circulation of the following questions regarding the secretariat's paper on regional standardizing and certifying bodies contained in document TBT/W/30.

1. The European Free Trade Association (page 5) maintains a notification procedure of all new regulations in advance of their implementation - are these notifications also sent to standards code signatories or exclusively to EFTA members?

2. There is no indication as to whether suppliers from non-member countries are granted access to certification under the CEN/CERT system for certifying compliance with standards, maintained by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) (page 9).

3. The purpose of the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) is stated as the removal of trade barriers between members' national standards and members are limited to European countries (page 10). This could have the effect of creating trade barriers between members' national standards and the standards of all other code signatories. Moreover, there is no indication as to whether suppliers from non-member countries are granted access to the CECC - a registered collective certification mark.

4. Likewise, there is no indication whether the International Commission on rules for the approval of Electrical Equipment (CEE) provides suppliers, as opposed to "bodies" from non-member countries access to the CB certificate and, consequently, the "E" mark (page 12).

It is heartening to note that not all regional bodies appear to be closed to suppliers from non-member countries. The rules for the Nordic certification systems for conformity with harmonized standards - INSTA - state that "It is open to manufacturers from countries outside Scandanavia" (page 13).

For these reasons, my Delegation would like more time to review this document and return to this matter at the next meeting of the Committee. In the interim, we believe that it would be appropriate for the GATT secretariat to query regional bodies about some of their operating rules, especially those on access to certification systems and opportunities to make comments. We would be glad to assist the GATT secretariat in the fulfillment of this task.