The following communication, dated 21 May 1987, has been received from the delegation of Japan with the request that it be circulated to members of the Group.

The Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade should be subject to review in the Group, particularly regarding the following items:

1. **Transparency of the Operations of Certification Systems**

   The existing Code addresses the issue of transparency basically in terms of notification/comments of rules of certification systems. But it is also necessary to ensure the operational part of transparency in order to prevent the system from becoming an undue obstacle to international trade. The existing Code is not adequate in this respect, and needs to be strengthened.

   For example, it is appropriate for signatories to officially announce the standard processing period to complete all the certification procedures managed by the central government bodies, and in case the agency in charge cannot deal with the application within this period, it is appropriate to put the agency under obligation to inform the applicants of the situation together with the reason for delay.

2. **Transparency in the Drafting Process of Standards and Certification Systems**

   The existing Code stipulates that the technical regulations and certification systems be notified to the GATT secretariat after completing their drafting, and that thereafter the contracting parties are to be given time to make comments in this regard. When standards or certification systems which have significant effect upon international trade are drafted or revised, however, it is desirable to allow representatives of foreign interest to have the opportunity to participate in the drafting process or to state their opinion during the process. It is appropriate to strengthen the Code to secure such opportunities as much as possible and to ensure that such opportunities are secured for representatives of foreign interests in a non-discriminatory and most-favoured-nation treatment basis.