

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

TBT/W/60

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Special Distribution

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

Original: English

SECOND MEETING ON PROCEDURES FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Discussion Paper submitted by the United States Delegation

The following paper is a revision to the discussion paper previously submitted by the United States and circulated in Committee document TBT/15.

I. Description of Activities and Facilities

II. Publicity

A. Documents Prepared by Other Parties on Standards Code Activities

The United States has prepared several reports and brochures describing U.S. Government programs established in support of the Standards Code. Articles have also been published in several magazines. The United States is interested in what type of publicity activities other Parties are involved with in connection with the Code.

III. Information Needs of Interested Parties

A. Computerized Information

The United States Enquiry Point has a computerized system which contains data on U.S. voluntary standards (the KWIC Index). The index is available on microfilm. The United States is interested in finding out what type of information is available from other Parties which may be of use to the United States.

B. Other Sources of Information

The United States Enquiry Point uses special indexes, listings of standards, an extensive collection of reference books, lexicons, directories, and a newly published directory of international organizations conducting standards-related activities, to respond to inquiries. The United States is interested in learning what information sources are used by other Parties.

C. Certification Information

The United States has initiated efforts to collect information on certification rules and programs from foreign and international standards organizations, U.S. trade and professional organizations, and state agencies. The United States would like to know what type of certification information is available from other Parties and whether or not it is available in English.

D. Indexes of Government Regulations

The United States Government publishes an index of the Code of Federal Regulations each year. This index lists all U.S. regulations by subject area. The United States would like to obtain copies of similar indexes from other Parties to assist us in responding to inquiries.

IV. Notifications

A. Expansion of Regulation Description

To aid Parties to the Agreement in determining whether the text of a proposed regulation would be useful, a more detailed description of the new regulation and/or changes should be made in item 6 of the notification form. The United States will be providing more detailed information in future notifications.

V. Conditions of Access to Information

A. Inquiries which Enquiry Points Should be Prepared to Answer

Enquiry Points should be able to respond to any inquiry dealing with standards regulations issued by their government, private standards organizations, and regional standards bodies. In cases where the information is not available directly from the Enquiry Point, the requestor should be referred to the appropriate organization or source.

B. Translations

Many proposed regulations are not in English. The United States has arranged for a translation service on a shared-fee basis. We would like to know how other Parties handle translations, and whether there may be interest in cooperative programs for translating proposed regulations.

C. Comment Period Extensions

The United States Enquiry Point has not received any requests for extensions. The lack of requests may be due to the fact that Parties seeking an extension or additional information are referred by the Enquiry Point to the U.S. Government agency responsible for the proposed regulation. All requests made by the United States for extensions have been granted or acceptable responses have been given for not extending the comment period. The United States received comments on at least one proposed regulation after the closing date for comments. The comments were reviewed by the relevant agency and a response was sent to the commenting country.

VI. Technical Assistance

VII. Other Business

A. Criteria for Determining Trade Significant Regulations

The United States has suggested that guidelines be developed for voluntary use by Parties in selecting the proposed regulations to be notified to the GATT. In addition, the United States is interested in finding out what procedures are currently used by the Parties in selecting regulations for notification to the GATT. The Enquiry Point meeting should examine this issue with a view towards providing the Committee with a list of possible criteria that may be used as guidelines. The United States has suggested that such criteria could include:

- dollar volume and/or quantity of imports from countries which are Parties to the Agreement;
- market size of the product in the reporting country;
- potential for market growth for the product in the reporting country; and,
- the cost or lead time involved for exporters in other countries to comply with the regulation.