

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED

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26 January 1995

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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

WTO STANDARDS INFORMATION SERVICE OPERATED BY ISO

Note by the Secretariat

Subsequent to the Ministerial Decisions taken in Marrakesh on 15 April 1994, the following letters have been exchanged between the Secretary-General of the ISO Central Secretariat and the Director-General relating to the understanding with the International Organization for Standardization to establish a WTO-ISO information system.

I

14 November 1994

Dear Richard,

Memorandum of Understanding on the WTO Standards Information Service operated by ISO

Please find enclosed the text of the *Memorandum of Understanding on the WTO Standards Information Service operated by ISO* as approved by the ISO Council, prepared in implementation of the Ministerial Decision on establishing a WTO-ISO Information system.

I am ready to enter into a formal agreement at your convenience through an exchange of letters with the GATT or WTO Director-General.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your collaboration in preparing this document.

Yours sincerely,

Lawrence D. Eicher
(Secretary-General of ISO)

Mr. Richard Eglin
Director
Trade and Environment Division
GATT
Geneva

14 November 1994

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON WTO STANDARDS INFORMATION SERVICE OPERATED BY ISO

The *WTO Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards* (Annex 3 to the *Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade*) contains the following paragraphs with regard to information on standardizing bodies that have accepted the above code and on their standards work programmes:

C. Standardizing bodies that have accepted or withdrawn from this Code shall notify this fact to the ISO/IEC Information Centre in Geneva. The notification shall include the name and address of the body concerned and the scope of its current and expected standardization activities. The notification may be sent either directly to the ISO/IEC Information Centre, or through the national member body of ISO/IEC or, preferably, through the relevant national member or international affiliate of ISONET, as appropriate.

J. At least once every six months, the standardizing body shall publish a work programme containing its name and address, the standards it is currently preparing and the standards which it has adopted in the preceding period. A standard is under preparation from the moment a decision has been taken to develop a standard until that standard has been adopted. The titles of specific draft standards shall, upon request, be provided in English, French or Spanish. A notice of the existence of the work programme shall be published in a national or, as the case may be, regional publication of standardization activities.

The work programme shall for each standard indicate, in accordance with any ISONET rules, the classification relevant to the subject matter, the stage attained in the standard's development, and the references of any international standards taken as a basis. No later than at the time of publication of its work programme, the standardizing body shall notify the existence thereof to the ISO/IEC Information Centre in Geneva.

The notification shall contain the name and address of the standardizing body, the name and issue of the publication in which the work programme is published, the period to which the work programme applies, its price (if any), and how and where it can be obtained. The notification may be sent directly to the ISO/IEC Information Centre, or, preferably, through the relevant national member or international affiliate of ISONET, as appropriate.

The WTO Secretariat and the ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS) have agreed to establish a WTO standards information service operated by ISO Central Secretariat under which:

1. The ISO/IEC Information Centre receives notifications as indicated in paragraphs C and J from standardizing bodies in English, French or Spanish languages;
2. The ISO Central Secretariat together with the WTO Secretariat shall develop and circulate to the members of WTO and ISONET standard notification forms with relevant instructions for their use;
3. The standards work programme of a standardizing body that has accepted the above-mentioned Code shall for each standard contain the following attributes:

- (a) a **classification** which indicates the subject matter of a given standard or draft; for this purpose, the *International Classification for Standards (ICS)* should be used;
- (b) **stage code** which would indicate the stage of development of a given standard; for this purpose, at least five stages of development should be distinguished: (1) the stage at which the decision to develop a standard has been taken, but technical work has not yet begun; (2) the stage at which technical work has begun, but the period for the submission of comments has not yet started; (3) the stage at which the period for the submission of comments has started, but has not yet been completed; (4) the stage at which the period for the submission of comments has been completed, but the standard has not yet been adopted; and (5) the stage at which the standard has been adopted; the *International harmonized stage code system for the development of standards* should be used (the system has been developed by a group of experts from AFNOR, BSI, CEN, CENELEC, DIN, ETSI, IEC, ISO, ITU);
- (c) **reference number** of any international standard taken as a basis for the development of a given standard; the reference number shall be indicated in accordance with the identification system covered by ISO/IEC Guide 3: 1981 *Identification of national standards that are equivalent to International Standards* and ISO/IEC Guide 21: 1981 *Adoption of International Standards in national standards* and its Addendum 1: 1983 *Indication of the degree of equivalence between national standards and International Standards*.

4. The ISO/IEC Information Centre shall promptly convey to the WTO Secretariat a copy of any notification referred to in paragraph C of the Code of good practice;

5. Information on standardizing bodies that have accepted or withdrawn from the *Code of good practice* and on the work programmes of standardizing bodies, required under paragraph C and the third part of paragraph J, shall be published annually in an ISO/IEC Information Centre periodical publication and may be monthly updated in the *ISO Bulletin*. This publication, for which a reasonable fee will be charged, shall be available to ISONET members and through the WTO Secretariat to WTO members. All related translations shall be provided by the WTO Secretariat.

II

16 January 1995

Sir,

I have the pleasure to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 14 November 1994, reading in part as follows:

"Please find enclosed the text of the *Memorandum of Understanding on the WTO Standards Information Service operated by ISO* as approved by the ISO Council, prepared in implementation of the Ministerial Decision on establishing a WTO-ISO Information system.

I am ready to enter into a formal agreement at your convenience through an exchange of letters with the GATT or WTO Director-General."

In reply, I have the pleasure to inform you that, at its meeting on 21 December 1994, the Preparatory Committee for the World Trade Organization approved the recommendation that: "The Director-General of the WTO is invited to enter expeditiously into an agreement with the ISO Central Secretariat to establish a WTO Standards Information Service operated by ISO".

I am pleased, therefore, to hereby accept on behalf of the WTO the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding and, in consequence, your letter together with this reply constitute an agreement between the Secretary-General of the ISO Central Secretariat and the Director-General of the WTO.

Please accept, Sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Peter D. Sutherland

Mr. Lawrence D. Eicher
Secretary-General
International Organization for
Standardization
Geneva