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**Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade**

**STATEMENTS DELIVERED BY THE WTO SECRETARIAT AT  
THE TBT COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF 28-30 MARCH 2017**

This document contains the statements made by the WTO Secretariat at the Thematic Session on Conformity Assessment Procedures on 28 March 2017 and at the regular meeting on 29-30 March 2017.

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**1 CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT: SECRETARIAT DOCUMENT JOB/TBT/224**

1.1. This paper is a revision and update of a previous background document on Conformity Assessment Procedures (JOB/TBT/69). It is intended to provide a basis for further discussion in the Committee in the area of Conformity Assessment Procedures – particularly in light of the upcoming triennial review and the fact that there are several pending recommendations before the Committee in this area. The paper summarizes the work that has been done. The work of the Committee has focused on three areas: approaches to the conformity assessment; the use of relevant international guides or recommendations; and, facilitating the recognition of conformity assessment results. The paper puts particular emphasis on the first area: the factors that are important to consider when deciding on what conformity assessment procedures to use in different situations (e.g., risk, product sector).

**2 EPING: UPDATE**

2.1. During the November 2016 TBT Committee meeting, UNDESA, WTO and ITC launched [ePing](#) – the SPS&TBT notification alert system. ePing is a publically accessible online platform that helps private sector stakeholders and government officials track relevant new SPS and TBT notifications. The system also provides several tools to follow up on notifications, allowing potential trade issues to be addressed at an early stage. Four months after the launch, more than 1,900 subscribers have registered on ePing, covering 142 countries. At the beginning of 2017, an ePing survey was set up to gather feedback from users; considering that the system was launched only recently, the results of the survey were largely positive, although around three quarters of the respondents indicated that training (either online or face-to-face) would help them to make better use of ePing.

2.2. As soon as a pilot version was available, the WTO Secretariat, as well as ITC and UNDESA, started to receive requests for training and information activities on the system. In 2016, more than ten ePing training and information events were organized, and ePing-related activities continue to make up a substantial part of the TBT Secretariat's technical assistance schedule. All three organizations are looking into options to increase the training and information sessions to accommodate requests. Besides training, future activities will focus on maintenance, improving and elaborating the ePing as well as promoting the system, especially in developing and least developed countries.

**3 ENQUIRY POINT GUIDE: PROGRESS REPORT**

3.1. At the Seventh Triennial Review, Members requested that "the Secretariat, based on experiences shared by Members and for the purposes of training and capacity building, to prepare a guide on best practices for enquiry points ...".<sup>1</sup> At the informal TBT Committee meeting in September 2016, Members were informed about the availability of an online survey for the enquiry

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<sup>1</sup> G/TBT/37, para. 5.12(a)(ii).

points, to which 68 Members responded; the findings of this survey are being used in the drafting of the guide. The purpose of the guide will be to assist Members in implementing the TBT Agreement's transparency provisions with respect to enquiry points. It will do this primarily by providing an overview of the TBT Agreement's main obligations, relevant decisions and recommendations taken by the Committee, and experiences gathered from Members. It will cover the establishment of enquiry points, their main functions, and highlight some of the key findings from the survey, such as the importance of these institutions in the implementation of Members' transparency commitments. The guide is scheduled to be finalized later in 2017.

#### **4 ANNUAL REVIEW: SECRETARIAT DOCUMENT G/TBT/39/REV.1<sup>2</sup>**

4.1. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Review of the TBT Agreement is contained in document G/TBT/39/Rev.1, a factual report covering the activities of the Committee in 2016. The executive summary provides a good snapshot of significant work undertaken by the Committee, highlights of which include: (i) launch of "ePing"; (ii) on transparency, the most notifications submitted in any one year in the Committee's history; (iii) the discussion of 173 STCs; (iv) seven thematic sessions including two on regulatory cooperation between Members, which focused on energy efficiency and food labelling; and (v) the Eighth Special Meeting on Procedures for Information Exchange. The document also contains a range of charts presenting information on notifications and STCs drawn from information contained in the [TBT IMS](#) which has recently been relaunched with additional features of directly downloading such graphs.

#### **5 TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES: 2016-2017 BIENNIUM**

5.1. Similar to previous years, in 2016 the TBT TA activities requested and provided by the Secretariat continued to be very significant<sup>3</sup>, consistent with growing demand over the last few years. During 2016, the WTO Secretariat organized, or otherwise participated in, a total of 37 TBT TA activities in various formats, of which 15 were national, regional and Geneva-based workshops, organized specifically on the TBT Agreement. Three of these TBT-specific activities were of particular significance, namely: (i) a week-long "Follow-up to the Advanced Course on the TBT Agreement", organized jointly by TED and ITTC, for which 20 participants from the 2015 TBT advanced course returned to Geneva to share experiences and to report on progress made in the implementation of their action plans; (ii) a "Workshop on Standards, Regulations and Health", the first of this kind ever organized, developed and organized by TED (jointly with ACD); and (iii) a three-day "Workshop on TBT Transparency and Transparency Enhancing Tools", organized in parallel with the November TBT Committee, which was attended by 29 participants from least-developed and developing countries, all involved in the implementation of the TBT Agreement at national level. More than half of the 2016 national, regional and Geneva-based TBT specific activities also covered the SPS Agreement and were organized in cooperation with the Secretariat experts responsible for that area. Indeed, demand for joint TBT-SPS national workshops has significantly increased since 2015. Preliminary data for TBT TA activities in 2017 indicates that delivery of national activities will likely again increase as compared to recent years, and that demand for TBT TA activities, in general, will remain significant. Several TA activities have also been held on ePing.

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<sup>2</sup> The revision was circulated in G/TBT/39/Rev.1 on 18 May 2017.

<sup>3</sup> G/TBT/GEN/212.