

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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(95-2935)

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JULY 1995

Chairperson: Ambassador C.L. Guarda (Chile)

1. The WTO and the GATT Committees on Technical Barriers to Trade held jointly their second and fiftieth meetings, respectively, on 14 July 1995.

2. The following agenda contained in WTO/AIR/116 and GATT/AIR/3692 was adopted:

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3. The Committee agreed to grant observer status to the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization on an ad hoc basis, pending final agreement on guidelines for observer status for international intergovernmental organization in the WTO.

A. PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE UNDER THE WTO TBT AGREEMENT

4. The Chairperson recalled that at the last Committee meeting on 21 April 1995, the WTO TBT Committee had held discussions on procedures for notification and information exchange under the WTO TBT Agreement based on the updated decisions and recommendations of the Tokyo Round TBT Committee contained in document G/TBT/W/2. She said that a revision of that document (G/TBT/W/2/Rev.1) had been prepared by the Secretariat based on the result of the discussions and

the further suggestions submitted. She reported that an informal meeting had been held to discuss the subject matter, and the decisions and recommendations contained in document G/TBT/W/2/Rev.1 had been agreed upon, with the words "Parties" on page 10 to be replaced by "Members".

5. The Committee agreed to adopt the decisions and recommendations contained in G/TBT/W/2/Rev.1 with the minor changes mentioned above, as its decisions and recommendations regarding procedures for notification and information exchange under the WTO TBT Agreement.

6. The Chairperson drew attention to the fact that under Article 15.2 of the WTO TBT Agreement, all Members should submit their written statements on implementation and administration of the Agreement to the Secretariat as soon as possible. She suggested that those WTO Members who had been Tokyo Round TBT Signatories and whose legislations were already in place and had been examined, should simply indicate whether the statements notified under the Tokyo Round TBT Agreement (contained in documents TBT/1 and addendum) remained valid under the WTO TBT Agreement, with a specific reference to the documents containing the statements. The Secretariat would then proceed to circulate those statements in the WTO series.

7. The representative of the United States said that the statement submitted by her delegation under the Tokyo Round Agreement had been made fifteen years ago and would need updating. Although many legislations regarding internal procedures remained the same, new legislations had been adopted in her country when signing the WTO Agreement. She said that her delegation might submit a new statement instead of describing what had been changed and suggested other Members to consider doing the same. The Chairperson shared the view that if the statements made under the Tokyo Round Agreement were no longer up-to-date under the WTO TBT Agreement, it would be more practical to submit new ones.

8. The Committee took note of the statements made.

B. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION OF THE WTO TBT AGREEMENT UNDER ARTICLE 15.3

9. The Chairperson noted that under Article 15.3 of the WTO TBT Agreement, the Committee should review annually the implementation and operation of the Agreement taking into account the objectives thereof. She recalled that at the last Committee meeting, she had proposed that she would hold informal consultations with interested Members on the value of having an Annual Review for 1995 and on how to carry out the annual review under the WTO TBT Agreement. In that connection, she drew attention to document G/TBT/W/8 which contained proposals from the United States regarding the essential elements for the purpose of the annual review.

10. The representative of the United States explained that the main purpose of the communication was to consider streamlining the information compiled for the annual review. She said that the proposal was mainly a continuation of the past reviews under the Tokyo Round with the deletion of the information regarding requests received and answered in enquiry points of Members because the information had not been submitted by all delegations and its value and consistency was questionable. Regarding the information on the implementation and administration of the Agreement, she suggested that the Secretariat could make a summary table listing the references to the documents containing Members' statements with the dates of acceptance of the Agreement by them. She pointed out that

all the information needed for preparing the proposed annual review would have been already available to the Secretariat. She added that Members could consider any additional information in the subsequent annual reviews.

11. The representative of Brazil generally supported the US proposals. However, he said that it was not necessary to repeat each year the information on the dates of acceptance of the Agreement by Members because the WTO TBT Agreement was part of the WTO Agreement, once a country became a WTO Member, it would automatically become a Member of the Committee.

12. The representative of the European Communities supported the US proposals and suggested that the following tables could also be included in the annual review: (i) a table indicating the total number of notifications made by Members under the relevant Articles since the entry into force of the Agreement to provide a general indication of the development of the existing regulatory systems; (ii) a table providing the total number of notifications made under the different legitimate objectives (as enumerated in the Agreement and others) stated by Members on their notifications in the current period, previous period and since 1 January 1995, with the intention not to monitor individual Member but to provide a general indication on the development of the subject matter over time; and (iii) a table providing information on all the WTO documents related to the TBT Agreement with the reference number, date of issue, a short content description and number of pages of each document.

13. The representative of Canada shared the view expressed by the representative of the United States that there was a need to reassess and streamline the information in the annual review. He said that further consideration might be needed, given the importance of the annual review and comments made by delegations. He proposed that the Secretariat should conduct an informal survey among interested Members of the possible changes to the annual review, taking into account also the outcome of any discussion on the subject at the forthcoming meeting on procedures for information exchange. The Committee could come back to the subject at its next meeting, keeping in mind that the first annual review of the WTO/TBT Agreement should be in place at the beginning of 1996.

14. The representative of Mexico supported the general structure of the annual review proposed by the United States and said that the proposals made by the European Communities were useful. She shared the view expressed by the representative of Canada that the Committee would need more time to look into the different elements of the proposals made. She expressed concern that the reviews made in the past had been too quantitative, particularly in relation to comment periods provided by Members and suggested that the qualitative aspects should also be taken into account. She gave the example of the case in which a Member might be considered too transparent as a result of notifying a great number of notifications continuously, some of which might not have any significant impact on trade. She took the opportunity to answer some of the questions which had been raised in the Committee regarding notifications made by Mexico and said that her country was presently reforming and updating its legislations. As a result, many of the related standards were not new standards but updated standards which might not have real impact on trade but were notified for the reason of transparency. She said that generally, her authorities would provide comment periods recommended in the Agreement. However, there might be cases in which shorter comment periods were given when her country notified, for the reason of transparency, a great number of the draft standards which did not have real impact on trade. She questioned how a Member would be evaluated under such circumstances during the review, i.e. would the criteria be the number of days provided for comments on a quantitative basis (according to which that Member might be considered as not carrying out its notification obligations correctly), or on a qualitative basis of whether or not the standards notified had impact on trade. She reiterated that the qualitative aspect should also be kept in mind at the annual

review and thought that the emphasis on the quantitative aspect might discourage transparency. She suggested that Members be given opportunities in the annual review to clarify any special circumstances.

15. The Chairperson concluded that Members might need more informal consultations on the structure of the Annual Review under the WTO TBT Agreement and requested interested Members to submit further suggestions to the Secretariat so that a paper could be prepared to facilitate the discussions. She said that the first annual review would be conducted at the spring meeting of 1996 and as a result, related decisions would have to be taken at the autumn meeting this year.

16. The Committee took note of the statements made.

C. ECO-LABELLING

17. The Chairperson recalled that at the last Committee meeting certain Members had expressed interest in the subject of eco-labelling schemes. She drew attention to document G/TBT/W/9 which contained a communication from Canada concerning the subject matter.

18. The representative of Canada said that further to the Canadian remarks in the Committee on Trade and Environment on 6 April, his delegation had been reflecting on how best to advance the discussions on eco-labelling. He said that as noted in the communication, his delegation's objective was not to examine the merits or legitimacy of eco-labelling *per se* nor to question the validity or appropriateness of domestic standards set by national authorities for the purpose of environmental protection within their own jurisdiction. He said that his delegation recognized that eco-labelling could be an important tool for encouraging industries to adopt higher standards of environmental protection by influencing consumer and possible government purchasing patterns. For that reason, it was critical to consider the possible trade impact of eco-labelling programmes and how they impacted on imports compared to domestic goods, given their influence on purchasing decisions, the number of countries that used them and the range of products covered.

19. He recalled that at the meeting of the Committee on Trade and the Environment on 21 June 1995, the Secretariat had been asked to prepare a background paper providing information about the TBT Agreement and relevant aspects of its negotiating history. He thought that as a first step, the TBT Committee could endorse the request for that document and schedule consideration of it at its next meeting. He said that the Canadian communication suggested a number of key issues which warranted analysis and discussion. However, the intention was not to enter into substantive discussion of these issues at the current meeting, given that any such discussion would benefit from the information provided by the background paper under preparation by the Secretariat. He said that review of that paper and discussions in the TBT Committee would assist the work in the Committee on Trade and Environment on eco-labelling.

20. The representative of the European Communities supported the Canadian request for a background paper prepared by the Secretariat. However, he said that within the TBT Committee at this stage, eco-labelling could not be separated from the issue of labelling in general and for this reason, the Secretariat paper should be broadened in order to consider labelling for environmental purposes from the perspective of the general labelling issue. He added that with the specific technical competence of the TBT Committee, Members should focus more on the technical clarifications needed and less on the political aspects which were relevant in the discussion of the Committee on Trade and Environment.

21. He proposed that the Secretariat paper on the negotiation history should focus on the definitions contained in Annex 1 of the Agreement with the relevant points including: (i) non-product related PPMs and labelling in general and (ii) "recognised bodies" in the definition of "standards". He thought that, from a legal point of view, the concept of "bodies" in the term "recognized bodies" encompassed all entities which had some forms of legal characteristics, regardless whether they were public or private entities. At the same time, from a trading perspective, the level of government involvement did not significantly determine the impact of voluntary eco-labelling programmes in the market place. He thought that a clarification of these issues in the first place would help the discussions in the Committee on Trade and Environment.
22. The representative of Brazil reiterated his delegation's interest in the issue both in the TBT Committee and in the Committee on Trade and Environment. He supported the Canadian proposal and welcomed the comments made by the European Communities. He said that discussions should take place when the Secretariat background paper was ready and although discussions could take place in the TBT Committee and the Committee on Trade and Environment, close contact should be maintained so that divergence could be avoided. For that reason, he suggested joint informal consultations at some point in the process.
23. The representative of Japan supported the view that the Committee should address the issues relating to the applicability of the TBT Agreement to eco-labelling in close cooperation with the Committee on Trade and Environment. He said that the discussions at the Committee's next meeting should be based on the Secretariat background paper which would provide information on the negotiating history of the TBT Agreement during the Tokyo Round and Uruguay Round relating to eco-labelling, non-related processes and production methods, as well as information on the concept of eco-labelling itself.
24. The representative of Switzerland supported the Canadian proposal and said that it was important for the Committee to deal with the question of eco-labelling because of the current mushrooming of different forms of eco-labelling programs which had an increasing impact on trade. She said that these labelling programs reflected the philosophy of the TBT Agreement in terms of product requirements and procedures for conformity assessment. However, further thought should be given to whether or not these programmes were completely covered by the TBT Agreement. She requested the Secretariat to prepare the background document so that the Committee could study these questions, hold discussion at its next meeting and decide whether the question of eco-labelling should be examined regularly within the Committee.
25. The representative of India supported the Canadian proposal that the Secretariat should prepare the background document on eco-labelling and that the Committee could hold discussions on the matter at its next meeting.
26. The representative of the United States supported the proposal made by Canada and to study of the coverage of eco-labelling under the TBT Agreement. She said that the Committee had an important role, providing information to the Committee on Trade and Environment on how the TBT Agreement operated and related to eco-labelling. She asked for more information on the content of the Secretariat background paper.
27. The representative of the Secretariat said that the background paper requested by the Committee on Trade and Environment was on the factual negotiating history of three aspects of the TBT Agreement, including the coverage of process and production methods, labelling and voluntary standards.

28. The representative of the United States recalled that the subject of conformity assessment relating to eco-labelling had been raised earlier by another delegation and said that including that subject in the background document and the discussions of the Committee would be useful to assist the Committee on Trade and Environment to understand the discipline of the TBT Agreement on eco-labelling.

29. The representative of New Zealand supported the Canadian proposal for a background paper which would provide a sound basis for consideration of the question in the future. He said that his delegation was interested in the comments made by a number of delegations, in particular the European Communities, and would reflect on them.

30. The representative of Malaysia, speaking on behalf of the ASEAN countries, supported the Canadian proposal for a background paper on eco-labelling which would include the negotiating history and the other elements which had been proposed. He said that eco-labelling was an issue which his region was confronting and had resorted to bilateral means to deal with it. Thus, he welcomed the discussion of this issue in any multilateral fora. He said that transparency was one of the main issues of eco-labelling and suggested that the paper should also cover the subject of transparency with regard to the TBT Agreement.

31. The representative of Venezuela supported the request made by Canada for the Secretariat background paper. However, he thought that some of the issues being raised, including those suggested in the Canadian statement, were not covered in the Secretariat paper. He said that there were broad implications of eco-labelling and the Committee should not focus only on the subject matters put before it. He suggested that several other elements could be added to the discussions. He recalled that eco-labelling had been discussed in other fora, particularly on subjects of special concern to developing countries. He asked the Secretariat to take into account the work which had been done in these fora, such as UNCTAD and the ad hoc working group on trade and environment under UNCTAD. He said that his delegation was flexible on where the discussions should take place, whether in the Committee on Trade and Environment or the TBT Committee, and asked the Chairperson to guide the Committee in this respect.

32. The representative of Argentina supported the Canadian proposal requesting the Secretariat to prepare the background paper on the negotiating history of the TBT Agreement focusing on the three aspects mentioned by the representative of the Secretariat. He said that it was not necessary to have two separate discussions under the Committee on Trade and Environment and the TBT Committee and supported the Brazilian suggestion for joint informal meetings to avoid the divergence of conclusions which might be reached from these discussions.

33. The Committee took note of the statements made and agreed to endorse the request by the Committee on Trade and Environment for the Secretariat background paper on the factual negotiating history of the TBT Agreement relating to eco-labelling, taking into account of the statements made at today's meeting, and that eco-labelling would be included in the agenda of its next meeting.

D. STATEMENTS ON IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE AGREEMENT

34. No statement was made under this agenda item.

E. ISO 9000 AND ISO 14000

35. The Chairperson recalled that several Members of the Committee had expressed an interest in learning more about the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 standard series. She said that as a result, on behalf of the Committee, the representative of the ISO had been invited to give a presentation on this subject to help the Committee better understand these ISO initiatives.

36. The representative from the ISO said that ISO was one of the three apex worldwide non-governmental organizations preparing voluntary international standards. There were 114 ISO member countries and 9,800 ISO standards. He said that ISO believed that international standardization would bring the following benefits: (i) avoidance of technical barriers to trade, (ii) quality and reliability at reasonable price and steady supply, (iii) user satisfaction and safety, (iv) environmental protection, (v) compatibility and inter-operability, (vi) simplification for usability, and (vii) production efficiency. As a result, suppliers could compete in the worldwide market and clients could have a wide choice of compatible offers. Smaller economies engaging in the work of international standardization would have freedom to compete in more markets and have equal footing in the development of standards. He said that there had been a growth in interest in international standardization due to the trade liberalization under the GATT/WTO, the need for communication and technological interchange, and environmentally sustainable industrial development.

37. He explained that the work of standard development within the ISO was done in technical committees with sub-fields treated by sub-committees, under which working groups were established. The ISO Central Secretariat was acting as the central coordination. At present, there were 185 active technical committees, 636 sub-committees, 1,975 working groups with 35,000 experts supported by industries or universities participating in the work, and 821 secretariats from 35 countries acting as secretaries of the technical committees. Each technical committee consisted of participating members, observer members, liaison organizations (from international organizations), and delegations of suppliers, user representatives and government, taking a national position.

38. He said that ISO 9000 standard series on quality management and quality assurance had been developed by Technical Committee TC 176 which was established in 1979. The proposal for this had been controversial because management had been considered to be neither scientific nor technical enough to standardize. ISO 9000 standards were established in 1987 and recently, there were 51 countries participating actively in TC 176 and 16 countries as observer members; 71 countries had accepted ISO 9000 as their national standards without any modification and 14 other countries were in the process of doing so. Many companies were introducing ISO 9000 to accept products, for example, the three biggest US locomotive industries had agreed to have a common document on quality for their suppliers in which ISO 9000 had been integrated. He said that although ISO was involved in the work of standardization, it did not issue certifications. However, there were 17 certification/registration systems established in different countries, actively engaged in assessing conformity of companies to ISO 9000 standard series. It was estimated that 70,000 certificates had been issued for ISO 9000 worldwide in June 1994.

39. He said that the core documents of the ISO 9000 standard series included ISO 9000 itself (first published in 1987, providing the fundamental concept of the standard) and its first revision (issued in 1994 which included ISO 9000-1: Quality management and quality assurance standards, and Part 1: Guidelines for selection and use). ISO 9001, 9002 and 9003 were documents relating to conformity assessment for certifications/registrations among which customers selected the quality system of their suppliers in a contractual way. The three standards were each a sub-set of the other, where

ISO 9001 had the most stringent requirements. ISO 9004 was a basic standard which contained guidelines for companies to establish their quality system.

40. He said that ISO 9000 could be applied worldwide because it offered a generic tool to assess the quality system of management in any company. Usually, there were several lines of production in a company and each production line would have several markets. If different quality systems were requested in different markets, it would be impossible for a company to have a consistence quality system. He emphasised that ISO 9000 was not a product standard but a standard to address the quality of management of an organization. There were twenty elements identified to establish a quality management system which included, for example: the management responsibility must exist in writing; there must be a quality policy in the company which must be known to all staff; there must be a system for reviewing contracts, making sure that goods were delivered without problem; and there must be controls on design, document and data, process, inspection, measuring and test equipment, nonconforming product, corrective and preventive action, handling, storage, packaging, preservation and delivery, and quality records.

41. He said that judging by the document itself, ISO 9000 did not create technical barriers to trade since it had been adopted by many countries as national standards. However, problems came when companies were to be assessed for conformity of the standard. He said that there were three possible ways of conformity assessment which included: (i) first party's (i.e. supplier's) declaration of conformity; (ii) second party's certification in which the customer audited the quality system of the supplier; and (iii) third party's certification in which a certification/registration body audited and certified the conformity of quality system of a supplier. He said that problems would arise when a customer, not knowing the certification body of another country, hesitated to accept the certificate issued by that certification body and requested certification from another one. In order to try to solve the problem, ISO/IEC had decided to establish a quality assessment recognition system (QSAR) so that when a supplier was certified/registered by a participating certification/registration body in the ISO/IEC system, that certification/registration would be recognized by its customers worldwide.

42. He said that the QSAR Board would be established under the ISO/IEC Council and served by the QSAR executive and programme manager. There would be a General Assembly of all the quality system accreditation bodies recognized under the QSAR program through a peer assessment system which demonstrated the adherence to the relevant ISO/IEC criteria. These accreditation bodies would then assess the quality system of certification/registration bodies which demonstrated the adherence to the relevant criteria and guidelines developed by the ISO/IEC Committee for Conformity Assessment (CASCO). These accredited certification/registration bodies would be permitted to use an ISO/IEC QSAR logo, so that their certificates could be accepted by customers throughout the world.

43. Referring to the field of environment, he said that ISO had been involved in the development of standards on testing methods and the measurement of air, water and soil quality, exhaust emissions, noise, vibration and shock. In 1993, ISO/TC 207 was established to prepare ISO 14000 standard series in a generic approach to evaluate the environmental performance of an organization. He said that ISO 14000 would be similar and compatible to ISO 9000, indicating the measures an organization must take into consideration in order to have high performance in its environmental management system. The documents of ISO 14000 were divided into the following two categories: (i) organization evaluation which included environmental management system, environmental performance evaluation and environmental auditing, and (ii) product evaluation which included life cycle assessment, environmental labelling and environmental aspects in product standards. He said that the work in the environmental labelling committee which was to develop criteria on how to introduce environmental labelling on

products would be of interest to the TBT Committee. The key principles of ISO/TC 207 were to develop environmental standards which would be cost-effective, non-prescriptive and flexible; applicable to all nations; suitable for internal or external verification; scientifically based; practical, useful and useable; as well as result in better environmental management and promote the broad interests of the public and users.

44. He said that the core documents of TC 207, including CD 14001 (Environmental Management Systems -specifications with guidance for use) and CD 14000 (Environmental Management Systems - General guidelines on principles, systems and supporting techniques) were at the stage of "draft international standard". These documents had gone through a technical enquiry among the 114 ISO members for verifications and the comments made would be taken into account and the final documents would be submitted for consensus approval before being published. He said that the documents were anticipated to be available in the market in 1996 or 1997.

45. He said that ISO/TC 176 and ISO/TC 207 were aiming to develop a compatible system which would enable a company to have one certificate for both its quality and environmental management systems at the same time, if they wished.

46. The representative of Canada said that his country was a strong supporter of the use of international standards and conformity assessment procedures as a mean of increasing transparency and harmonization. However, he expressed concern that a system which was meant to facilitate trade might be construed in such a way as to hinder it. He said that the experience of Canadian companies suggested that the international recognition of certification for ISO 9000 was a real issue and he thought that the same would apply to ISO 14000. He asked the representative of the ISO to clarify the status and development process of the ISO/IEC QSAR programm.

47. The representatives of Japan and New Zealand said that because of the importance and technicality of ISO 9000 and 14000, they would come back to the issue at the future Committee meetings. The representative of New Zealand asked the representative of the ISO for more information on the following subjects: (i) the proportion of the 114 ISO members participating actively in the work of developing ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 in the working groups and sub-committees; (ii) the coverage of clause 4.6 of ISO 9001 on purchasing; (iii) the nature of the specifications contained in the ISO 14000 Core Document (CD 14001) -Specifications with guidance for use; (iv) the development of the ISO 14000 Core Documents which were in the stage of draft international standards and the stage they had reached in the ISO Oslo meetings few weeks ago; and (v) the relationship between the ISO 14000 Core Documents and the seven sub-committees relating to environmental labelling and auditing, and the development of these sub-committees in terms of progress towards their publications into international standards.

48. The representative of Venezuela raised concerns of developing countries on the subject regarding the equivalence and mutual recognition of environmental standards and asked for more information on the work within ISO TC 207 on "Product Evaluation" which dealt with life cycle analysis, environmental labelling and environmental aspects in product standards. He asked if it was feasible to establish a follow-up mechanism on the work being done in the ISO, particularly with regard to the environmental aspect.

49. The representative of the ISO, referring to the question raised by the representative of Canada, reported that the ISO Council had decided in June, to go ahead and organize the QSAR system as soon as the basic documents were finalized by the Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO), which

would probably be before the end of the year. The board of QSAR could then be established at the end of 1995 or beginning 1996. Concerning the technical questions raised by the representatives of New Zealand and Venezuela, he said that the related documents were still under development and hence it would not be useful to have a detailed discussion within the TBT Committee. He said that he would provide the information in writing to the interested delegations.

50. The Chairperson said that she would invite the representative of the ISO to answer any further questions related to the subject at the subsequent Committee meetings. The Committee took note of the statements made and agreed that the subject matter relating to ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 would be included in the agenda for its next meeting in the autumn.

F. OTHER BUSINESS

51. The representative of the European Communities recalled that at the last meeting, the Committee had agreed that "notifications would be distributed to the missions in Geneva or to an address (one only) provided by the delegation. Failing to indicate an address meant that the notifications would be sent to the missions of delegations in Geneva." He said that his delegation had understood the "or" not as an exclusive "or", and asked the Committee to support the understanding that a maximum of two addresses should be available, for example, one to the delegation and the other to the capital, for those delegations which thought it necessary to facilitate the practical internal work. He said that if some delegations preferred to have notifications sent to one destination, they would be free to indicate so.

52. The representatives of Brazil said that if notifications were to be sent to both Geneva and one another address, it would cause budgetary problems in the Secretariat, but at the same time, if it were possible, the same treatment should be applied to all delegations.

53. The representative of New Zealand recalled that at the last meeting, his delegation supported the suggestion that notifications be circulated to only one address per Member in view of the increase membership in the WTO TBT Committee. He thought that it was not an unreasonable approach to place the responsibility in the hands of Members to work out within their own system on how to distribute their notifications so as to reduce the amount of documentation flow required to be undertaken by the Secretariat. He questioned the necessity for the EC delegation to have notifications circulated to two addresses because it was possible for his delegation and a number of other Members to have notifications sent to a single address.

54. The representative of Japan thought that confusion might arise if notifications were sent to two addresses.

55. The Chairperson thought that there were financial implications involved in the matter and said that she would hold informal consultation with interested Members to clarify the matter.

56. The Committee took note of the statements made.

57. The Chairperson recalled that at the last meeting the Committee had agreed to hold a meeting on procedures for information exchange in the autumn. She said that interested delegations had been consulted on the form of the meeting.

58. The Committee agreed to the Chairperson's proposal that a joint SPS and TBT special meeting on the subject of information procedures (notification and enquiry points) could facilitate the implementation of these procedures by some Members and requested the Chairman and the Secretariat to schedule such a meeting before the end of 1995.

59. The Chairperson noted that at its next meeting the GATT TBT Committee would conduct its sixteenth Annual Review under Article 15.8 of the Tokyo Round TBT Agreement and its Annual Report to the Contracting Parties and urged delegations to provide the Secretariat promptly and fully with the information which will be needed to prepare the background documentation for the Review. The Committee agreed to the Chairperson's proposal that the next WTO and GATT TBT Committees should be held in the autumn, with the exact date to be fixed closer to the time by the Chairperson in consultation with interested delegations.