

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

TBT/W/36  
29 September 1981

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## Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

### ACTIVITIES OF PRIVATE STANDARDIZING BODIES

#### Feasibility Study by the Secretariat

1. At its seventh meeting, on 12 June 1981, the Committee invited the secretariat to examine the feasibility of preparing a study of private standardizing bodies including the objectives, operating rules and activities of the organizations concerned (TBT/M/7, paragraph 62). This document is prepared in response to this request.
2. The main difficulty in producing a paper on private standardizing bodies (referred to in the Agreement as "non-governmental bodies"), and the main reason why a feasibility study has been requested, is the very large number of such bodies. This makes it difficult to prepare a paper, such as that produced by the secretariat on international and regional standardizing bodies (TBT/W/8, and Add.1 and TBT/W/30), which lists all private standardizing bodies. Some selection seems inevitable: this paper suggests how this would be done.
3. It is suggested that the paper should contain a brief description of the place of private standardizing bodies in the standardization system of each of the signatories of the Agreement.
4. It is suggested that the paper would also describe the activities of a number of private standardizing bodies which appear most relevant to the functioning of the Agreement, bearing in mind that, if the Agreement deals with private bodies it is largely because some of these bodies prepare standards which are used as a basis for technical regulations and because some standards produced by private bodies may in practice be mandatory.
5. It is suggested that the paper would not deal with individual companies preparing standards for their own production or consumption requirements, since these standards are not covered by the Agreement (see Annex 1 to the Agreement, definition 3).
6. The secretariat has already collected some information on private bodies. Details concerning national standardizing bodies are published by ISO and IEC. Other information is already available in the GATT - for instance in the inventory of non-tariff measures. The secretariat would, however, need to rely on delegations for additional information.
7. It is suggested that the Committee invite the secretariat to prepare a paper along the above lines for the first meeting of the Committee to be held in 1982 and the signatories to supply information which they wish to be included in the paper by the end of January 1982.