

**Council for Trade-Related Aspects
of Intellectual Property Rights
Special Session**

MULTILATERAL NOTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION SYSTEMS

Note by the Secretariat

Revision

This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and without prejudice to the positions of Members and to their rights and obligations under the WTO.

THE WTO CENTRAL REGISTRY OF NOTIFICATIONS (CRN)

1. Document TN/IP/W/4/Add.1 of 27 November 2002 provides information on the WTO Central Registry of Notifications (CRN). At its meeting of 30 November 2004, the Special Session of the Council for TRIPS agreed that the Secretariat would update document TN/IP/W/4/Add.1 to take into account any new developments concerning the CRN.
2. The CRN was established in 1995 pursuant to the Decision on Notification Procedures, adopted by Ministers at Marrakesh (see the Annex to this document). According to its Preamble, the Decision is aimed at improving the operation of notification procedures under the WTO Multilateral Trade Agreements and, where applicable, the Plurilateral Trade Agreements, and thereby at contributing to the transparency of Members' trade policies and the effectiveness of surveillance arrangements established to that end.
3. The CRN is a WTO computer database which records all regular notifications received by the Organization from Members and records descriptive information on each notification submitted. Regular notifications are those for which the Secretariat is able to determine that an obligation exists to notify certain information within a given period. References to documents can be retrieved from the CRN by means of specific searches, e.g., by the requirement under which the notification was made or by Member.
4. Pursuant to the terms set out in the above-mentioned Ministerial Decision, the following are the main characteristics of the CRN and the way that it is used:
 - the CRN records such elements of the information provided on the measure by the Member concerned as its purpose, its trade coverage, and the requirement under which it has been notified;

- the CRN records for each notification cross-references by Member and obligation;
- the administrator of the CRN informs each Member annually of the regular notification obligations to which that Member will be expected to respond in the course of the following year;
- the administrator of the CRN further draws the attention of individual Members to regular notification requirements which remain unfulfilled;
- information in the CRN regarding individual notifications is made available on request to any Member entitled to receive the notification concerned.

5. The CRN is an internal WTO computer database. However, some of the data recorded in this database have been incorporated in *Documents Online* and are directly accessible through the WTO Members' website and the WTO public website. A CRN web interface was created in May 2004 under *Documents Online*. It is accessible on *Documents Online*, either from the *Browse* page in the sub-heading *Frequently Consulted*, or from the *Search* page. It permits the retrieval of notification documents using specific data fields on the CRN database. The search mechanism operates in the same way as the standard search interface of *Documents Online*, and offers similar online help features to assist the user in formulating his/her queries. Documents retrieved by a search are presented in the standard display format of *Documents Online* and may be consulted directly on-screen or, alternatively, downloaded to a local computer.

ANNEX
DECISION ON NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES¹

Ministers decide to recommend adoption by the Ministerial Conference of the decision on improvement and review of notification procedures set out below.

Members,

Desiring to improve the operation of notification procedures under the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (hereinafter referred to as the "WTO Agreement"), and thereby to contribute to the transparency of Members' trade policies and to the effectiveness of surveillance arrangements established to that end;

Recalling obligations under the WTO Agreement to publish and notify, including obligations assumed under the terms of specific protocols of accession, waivers, and other agreements entered into by Members;

Agree as follows:

I. *General obligation to notify*

Members affirm their commitment to obligations under the Multilateral Trade Agreements and, where applicable, the Plurilateral Trade Agreements, regarding publication and notification.

Members recall their undertakings set out in the Understanding Regarding Notification, Consultation, Dispute Settlement and Surveillance adopted on 28 November 1979 (BISD 26S/210). With regard to their undertaking therein to notify, to the maximum extent possible, their adoption of trade measures affecting the operation of GATT 1994, such notification itself being without prejudice to views on the consistency of measures with or their relevance to rights and obligations under the Multilateral Trade Agreements and, where applicable, the Plurilateral Trade Agreements, Members agree to be guided, as appropriate, by the annexed list of measures. Members therefore agree that the introduction or modification of such measures is subject to the notification requirements of the 1979 Understanding.

II. *Central registry of notifications*

A central registry of notifications shall be established under the responsibility of the Secretariat. While Members will continue to follow existing notification procedures, the Secretariat shall ensure that the central registry records such elements of the information provided on the measure by the Member concerned as its purpose, its trade coverage, and the requirement under which it has been notified. The central registry shall cross-reference its records of notifications by Member and obligation.

The central registry shall inform each Member annually of the regular notification obligations to which that Member will be expected to respond in the course of the following year.

¹ "The Legal Texts, The Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations", World Trade Organization 1999, pages 388-390.

The central registry shall draw the attention of individual Members to regular notification requirements which remain unfulfilled.

Information in the central registry regarding individual notifications shall be made available on request to any Member entitled to receive the notification concerned.

III. *Review of notification obligations and procedures*

The Council for Trade in Goods will undertake a review of notification obligations and procedures under the Agreements in Annex 1A of the WTO Agreement. The review will be carried out by a working group, membership in which will be open to all Members. The group will be established immediately after the date of entry into force of the WTO Agreement.

The terms of reference of the working group will be:

- to undertake a thorough review of all existing notification obligations of Members established under the Agreements in Annex 1A of the WTO Agreement, with a view to simplifying, standardizing and consolidating these obligations to the greatest extent practicable, as well as to improving compliance with these obligations, bearing in mind the overall objective of improving the transparency of the trade policies of Members and the effectiveness of surveillance arrangements established to this end, and also bearing in mind the possible need of some developing country Members for assistance in meeting their notification obligations;
 - to make recommendations to the Council for Trade in Goods not later than two years after the entry into force of the WTO Agreement.
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ANNEX

INDICATIVE LIST¹ OF NOTIFIABLE MEASURES

Tariffs (including range and scope of bindings, GSP provisions, rates applied to members of free-trade areas/customs unions, other preferences)

Tariff quotas and surcharges

Quantitative restrictions, including voluntary export restraints and orderly marketing arrangements affecting imports

Other non-tariff measures such as licensing and mixing requirements; variable levies

Customs valuation

Rules of origin

Government procurement

Technical barriers

Safeguard actions

Anti-dumping actions

Countervailing actions

Export taxes

Export subsidies, tax exemptions and concessionary export financing

Free-trade zones, including in-bond manufacturing

Export restrictions, including voluntary export restraints and orderly marketing arrangements

Other government assistance, including subsidies, tax exemptions

Role of state-trading enterprises

Foreign exchange controls related to imports and exports

Government-mandated countertrade

Any other measure covered by the Multilateral Trade Agreements in Annex 1A to the WTO Agreement

¹ This list does not alter existing notification requirements in the Multilateral Trade Agreements in Annex 1A to the WTO Agreement or, where applicable, the Plurilateral Trade Agreements in Annex 4 of the WTO Agreement.