

MARKET ACCESS FOR NON-AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Answer to Questions from China on Remanufacturing

Communication from Japan, Switzerland, and the United States

The following communication, dated 20 November 2009, is being circulated at the request of the delegations of Japan, Switzerland, and the United States.

QUESTION: China holds the view that, on one hand, the development of remanufacturing industry is consistent with sustainable development. But on the other, it is too early for developing Members to commit themselves to anything on remanufactured goods because this industry is at its immature stage and the concept of remanufactured goods is still new to its domestic constituency.

China thanks the US for clarifying that this proposal does not require Members to adopt this definition of remanufactured goods into their domestic laws or regulations. The only binding obligation in the proposal is for Members to meet every six months to discuss alleged barriers to trade.

Bearing the above clarification in mind, China would like to ask the proponents: “do the current Council for Trade in Goods and its subsidiary committees prevent Members from raising their concerns in relation to remanufactured goods?” If yes, please give an example. If no, what is the value added through this proposal?

CO-SPONSORS’ ANSWER: We believe the merits of trade in remanufactured goods for WTO Members require a focused agenda in the Council for Trade in Goods, as many relevant market access issues raised by our industries cut across WTO Committees and subject matter. Nothing prevents Members from raising these issues in WTO Committees now. However, we expect that a work program using the proposed definition of a remanufactured good as a focal point for discussions will produce more value-added discussions and outcomes in the CTG for an industry that is growing in importance and can provide significant economic and environmental benefits for both developed and developing country Members.

The co-sponsors acknowledge that the topic of trade in remanufactured goods was relatively new for most Members when this proposal was first raised in NAMA in 2004 and the concept paper was introduced in 2005. Since then, we have presented information on remanufacturing and the issues surrounding trade in remanufactured goods to many Members at the WTO bilaterally, plurilaterally, as well as in other fora, such as APEC. We believe that Members are now more comfortable with the concepts and understand how remanufacturing can help the development of their economies. To continue to enhance Members’ familiarity with these issues, the co-sponsors hosted an industry-led workshop in remanufacturing at the WTO on 4 November 2009. The presentations made at that workshop are available to members upon request.
