

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

TN/TF/2
15 July 2005

(05-3173)

Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation

NEGOTIATING GROUP ON TRADE FACILITATION

Report by the Chairman to the Trade Negotiations Committee

- The negotiations on Trade Facilitation appear to be proceeding satisfactorily. The work of the Negotiating Group needs to continue to advance at a measured pace.
- The Work Plan adopted at the Group's first meeting under Paragraph 10 of the mandate is allowing the negotiations to proceed flexibly on the basis of Members' contributions, and allows delegations to address all the elements of the mandate in an integrated way.
- Many proposals have been received to date from a broad range of developed, developing and least-developed Members, focused on the clarification and improvement of relevant aspects of GATT Articles V, VIII and X. In the period up to the Hong Kong Ministerial meeting, it will be important to ensure that all the objectives of these negotiations contained in Paragraph 1 of the mandate¹, and all of the elements referred to in other parts of the mandate, in particular S&D treatment and technical assistance and capacity-building, are addressed in a balanced way in the negotiations on the basis of further contributions by Members.
- The compilation of proposals prepared by the Secretariat and circulated in TN/TF/W/43 can be a valuable working document on which to base the Negotiating Group's preparations for its report to the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. The compilation will be kept up-to-date.
- The Secretariat's technical assistance programme, and the collaborative effort of the other intergovernmental organizations, is appreciated. It will be kept under review by Members and adjusted, as necessary, in light of further developments in the Negotiating Group. Members who require technical assistance in order to help them identify their trade facilitation needs and priorities are encouraged to make their requirements known in the Negotiating Group and to the Secretariat as early as possible.

¹ Clarification and improvement of relevant aspects of Articles V, VIII and X of the GATT 1994, enhancement of technical assistance and support for capacity building in this area and provisions for effective cooperation between customs or any other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues.