

Committee on Specific Commitments

UPDATE TO THE ANNUAL REPORT OF 2002 OF THE COMMITTEE ON SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES (2003)

1. Since its last annual report¹ to the Council for Trade in Services, the Committee on Specific Commitments held three formal meetings. Minutes of these meetings are contained in WTO documents S/CSC/M/26-28.² The Committee in this period addressed three items: classification issues; matters relating to the scheduling of commitments; and state of play and possible future work. At the meeting of 27 February 2003, the Chairperson made a statement on procedures for the submission and circulation of initial offers.

I. CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

2. During the reporting period, the Committee discussed new communications concerning classification on Computer and related Services, and (S/CSC/W/37 – Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu) and Legal Services (S/CSC/W/39 – European Communities). At the meeting of 5 December 2002, the Secretariat was requested to revise the compendium of classification proposals to take account of new proposals, add footnote references to helpful documents, and rectify any omissions. The revised compendium was issued on 24 February as JOB(02)/143/Rev.1.

II. MATTERS RELATING TO THE SCHEDULING OF COMMITMENTS

3. At the meeting of 5 December 2002, the Chairperson reported on the Scheduling Workshop, held in November 2002, which had been conducted by the Secretariat upon a request by Members, and in which some one-hundred capital based, as well as eighty Geneva-based services officials had participated.

4. At the meetings of 5 December 2002 and 27 February 2003, the Committee continued its discussion of approaches to the scheduling of additional commitments under Article XVIII of the GATS.

5. At the meeting of 27 February 2003, a representative of the Secretariat reported that, upon request by Members, the Trade in Services Division had prepared 67 draft consolidated schedules and had converted another 62 schedules into Word format. Three Members had carried out the consolidation of their schedules themselves. The draft consolidated and converted schedules had been circulated in a one-off document series as S/DCS/W documents. He recalled the agreement of

¹ S/CSC/7, 6 December 2002.

² Meetings of 5 December 2002 (S/CSC/M26); 27 February 2003 (S/CSC/M/27), and 12 May 2003 (S/CSC/M/28).

Members that these draft schedules were not legal documents and were intended to serve as templates to facilitate the presentation of initial offers in the negotiations.³

III. PROCEDURES FOR THE SUBMISSION AND CIRCULATION OF INITIAL OFFERS – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

6. At the meeting of 27 February 2003, the Chairperson made a statement recalling certain points from earlier discussions regarding the technical side of the submission and circulation of initial offers. The Chairman's statement was circulated in JOB(03)/38.

IV. STATE OF PLAY AND POSSIBLE FUTURE WORK

7. At the meeting of 12 May 2003, Members had a first exchange of views on possible topics for, and the organization of future work. The discussion was facilitated by an informal note from the incoming and outgoing Chairpersons, contained in JOB(03)/74.

³ For further explanation, see Note by the Secretariat - Circulation of Draft Consolidated Schedules, S/CSC/W/38, 23 January 2003