

Committee on Specific Commitments

ANNOTATED AGENDA FOR THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS

1. The proposed agenda for the meeting of the Committee on Specific Commitments on 22 September 1999 has been circulated in WTO/AIR/1161. This annotated agenda provides background information on each agenda item.

I. DRAFT DECISION BY THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES ON THE CERTIFICATION OF RECTIFICATIONS OR IMPROVEMENT TO SCHEDULES OF SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS

2. At the last meeting of the Committee, held on 19 July 1999, the Chairman indicated that he would continue consultations on the procedures for the certification of rectifications or improvements to schedules of specific commitments with a view to taking a decision as soon as possible. In order to facilitate those consultations, the text of the draft decision of the Council for Trade in Services on certification of rectifications or improvements to schedules of specific commitments, previously contained in Annex 1 of document Job No. 6303 dated 17 November 1998, has been re-circulated separately as document Job No. 5203 dated 7 September 1999. It is proposed that those procedures be discussed at this meeting, if possible with a view to taking a decision.

II. SCHEDULING GUIDELINES

3. Members have before them two documents: Job No. 4055 "Revision of scheduling guidelines - points of emerging understanding" and Job No. 4056 "Revision of scheduling guidelines - list of outstanding issues". These documents have been discussed briefly at the last meeting of the Committee and will be discussed again in detail at this meeting.

4. In addition to the discussion of the specific points contained in those documents, Members may wish to consider how they intend to proceed with the revision of the scheduling guidelines in the light of the forthcoming negotiations. There appear to be two alternative approaches:

- (a) To agree on a definitive set of revised guidelines and related documents (a "scheduling manual") before the end of the year in order to have new rules ready for the beginning of the negotiations. In this case the revision would presumably contain the points agreed on the basis of document Job No. 4055, plus any related documents relevant for scheduling purposes and any point taken from Job No. 4056 (list of outstanding issues) which might be agreed at the Committee meetings of September and October.
- (b) To continue the work on scheduling guidelines beyond this year and to complete it some time during the course of the negotiations.

5. A third possibility, combining elements of these two approaches, would be to produce a provisional set of guidelines containing points already agreed by the end of this year, on the

understanding that any new points agreed to afterwards in the light of discussions would be incorporated later.

III. CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

6. The Committee will discuss the documents which have been submitted to it on the classification of environmental services, foreign legal consultancy services, postal and courier services and energy services. Members may also wish to consider, in a more general manner, the aim and methodology of their work regarding classification.

7. As far as the aim is concerned, the Committee agreed sometime ago to revise document W/120 when relevant. So far, however, there has been little progress towards specific amendments of W/120, largely because of methodological problems. For instance, the Secretariat list of environmentally related services (Job No. 5138) also produces a very extensive and disaggregated range of services which in most cases are only marginally or partially related to the environment. It may be helpful as a checklist of the content of offers, but seems unlikely to be useful to delegations in deciding what to schedule.

8. Amendments to document W/120 is only one possible approach, another might be to go back to the problems of classification and scheduling identified by Members during the exchange of information program and to use this as a basis for the production of "model schedules" for key sectors, as was done for telecommunications and maritime transport services. This does not preclude the consideration of any other approaches that may be suggested by Members.

IV. ELABORATION OF CONSOLIDATED ELECTRONIC SCHEDULES

9. Members have before them document S/CSC/W/22 which sets out, with the help of the mock schedule of an imaginary Member "Ruritania", the main technical differences between the future electronic schedule and the actual treaty copy and suggests a procedure for the verification and the circulation of these electronic schedules. Members may wish to consider those issues, including modalities and calendar proposed for the verification of those schedules.
