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**Committee on Market Access**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 28 JULY 2000**

Chairman: Mr. Christophe Kiener (Switzerland)

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The above agenda as reproduced in document WTO/AIR/1360 was adopted with the addition of items 2(a) and (b).

**1. Consolidated Tariff Schedules (CTS) Database Project**

- Format for Specific Commitments in Agriculture (G/MA/W/25)

1.1 The Chairman recalled that at the Committee's formal meeting of 27 June 2000 it was agreed that informal consultations should be held to consider the informal document containing the Secretariat's proposed format for inclusion of agricultural commitments into the CTS database which was distributed to all delegations at that meeting. The document was examined at an informal meeting held on 18 July 2000. At that meeting the general reaction to the document was favourable, although certain delegations indicated that more time would be required for their capitals to examine the document. It was agreed that another informal meeting would be held on 28 July 2000 to review the situation, and it was also agreed that a formal meeting of the Committee would follow the informal meeting for the purpose of adopting the report in case capitals had managed to complete their examination of the document and were satisfied with it.

1.2 The discussion at the informal meeting preceding this formal session had led him to understand that all capitals had now had sufficient time to review this document and were satisfied with it. He therefore proposed that the Committee adopt the document G/MA/W/25. He added that certain technical adjustments to the format might need to be made at the time of processing the data in case problems or situations which were not foreseen surfaced at that time. He also confirmed that the CTS database had no legal status, and that the information contained in the database would be released to all Members at the same time as soon as the requested input from all Members had been provided.

1.3 On this basis, the Committee adopted document G/MA/W/25<sup>1</sup> containing the proposed format for inclusion of Members' specific commitments in agriculture in the CTS database.

1.4 The representative of Japan stated that his delegation could support the format contained in document G/MA/W/25 especially as the database had no legal status. He informed the Committee that Japan was making every effort to submit the relevant data.

1.5 The Committee took note of the statement.

## **2. Other business**

### **(a) United States – IDB submissions**

2.1 The representative of the United States stated that informal consultations on the subject of IDB submissions were going to be held in the autumn and in the interim he appealed to Members to think of a system that would work and would produce reliably submissions to a database which everyone admitted was a valuable tool. A tool which would, however, lose its value if the pattern of submissions was interrupted or if submissions were not made at all. He invited those countries having experienced problems to come prepared to discuss the practicalities of what was necessary, whether it was technical assistance or direct contact between the Secretariat and statistical authorities back in capital, in order to address the problem of what appeared to be a deceleration in the pace of IDB submissions.

2.2 The representative of the Philippines stated that there was need for a decision as to whether Members should submit tariffs at the bound and applied rates as this would affect the picture of IDB submissions. She hoped that this issue would also be included in the informal consultations.

2.3 The representative of Canada supported the US statement. He hoped that Members would think about how best to address the outstanding problems, in particular as concerned the updating of submissions. As his delegation had indicated previously, one of its major concerns was that there seemed to be a dropping off of submissions after 1998 for tariffs and after 1996 for import data. His delegation looked forward to the informal consultations, including addressing the kinds of questions raised by the Philippines.

2.4 The Committee took note of the statements.

### **(b) Australia – HS96 submissions**

2.5 The representative of Australia stated that his delegation had found the informal document circulated by the Secretariat at the last meeting to be extremely useful in reconciling and stocktaking the situation in relation to the work on HS96 transpositions. It was true that his delegation owed some responses and in turn was owed some responses. His delegation had now moved into a phase of trying to expedite this work and would keep the Committee informed of any progress made.

2.6 The representative of Canada supported Australia's statement. The document produced by the Secretariat had helped in invigorating the HS96 work and the idea of a special session in the autumn at which Members would have to explain themselves had been a very useful device in that regard. It was his hope that before then his delegation would have reduced the number of countries to which it owed explanations.

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<sup>1</sup> Following its adoption, document G/MA/W/25 was issued as G/MA/110.

2.7 The Committee took note of the statements.

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