

General Council

NOTIFICATION OBLIGATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Communication from the Chairman

In November 1996, the Council for Trade in Goods, having considered the report of the Working Group on Notification Obligations and Procedures and the recommendations contained therein (G/L/112), had made the following recommendations to the General Council:

"(a) The Council requests the General Council to take the necessary steps to eliminate the notification obligations in the Decisions of the GATT 1947 CONTRACTING PARTIES relating to import licensing procedures (L/3756 and SR/28/6).

"(b) The Council requests the Ministerial Conference or the General Council to consider the establishment, at an appropriate time, of a body with a mandate to review the notification obligations and procedures throughout the WTO Agreement. Alternatively, consideration might be given to the establishment of a body, or the extension/modification of the mandate of the current Working Group, to conduct, at an appropriate time, a further comprehensive review of the notification obligations and procedures in the agreements in Annex 1A of the WTO Agreement. It was suggested that future work also encompass matters relating to the Central Registry of Notifications, electronic transmission of notifications and further work on the notifications handbook" (G/L/134, Section II).

At its meeting on 7, 8 and 13 November 1996, the General Council approved the recommendations of the Council for Trade in Goods and agreed to revert to this matter at a future meeting (WT/GC/M/16, item 8(c)(ii)).

With regard to the Goods Council's recommendation in (b) above, the former Chairman of the Working Group has had informal discussions with some delegations at the request of the General Council Chairman to determine the general views on the nature of the future work to be undertaken in this area, and the scope of that future work. On the basis of the discussions that he has had, it would appear that delegations require some more time for reflection on this matter. On the basis of this, it seems to me that no firm action can be considered at this stage. I would therefore wish to propose that Members agree that this matter be kept under review and reverted to at a future date as appropriate.

With regard to the recommendation in (a) above regarding steps to be taken to eliminate the notification obligations relating to import licensing procedures in a Decision of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the GATT 1947, it is proposed that the draft decision contained in the Annex be adopted by the General Council.

ANNEX

TERMINATION OF THE DECISION OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE
GATT 1947 RELATING TO IMPORT LICENSING PROCEDURES

Draft Decision

The General Council,

Noting that the Council for Trade in Goods, at its meeting on 15 October 1996 (G/C/M/14), had agreed to request the General Council to take the necessary steps to eliminate the notification obligations in the Decisions of the GATT 1947 CONTRACTING PARTIES relating to import licensing procedures (L/3756 and SR.28/6);

Decides as follows:

The notification obligations resulting from the Decision of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the GATT 1947 taken at their twenty-eighth Session in November 1972 (SR.28/6, item 3) to adopt the report of the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products, including the Committee's proposal regarding notification obligations on licensing systems (L/3756, paragraph 76¹), are hereby eliminated.

¹The paragraph reads as follows: "In addition, it [the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products] proposes to the Council that contracting parties should notify changes of licensing systems at the same time as notifications are made on import restrictions, i.e. 30 September of each year."