

Committee on Specific Commitments

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

1. Since its last report to the Council for Trade in Services, the Committee on Specific Commitments held five formal meetings between 30 November 2001 and 24 October 2002. The reports of these meetings are contained in documents S/CSC/M/21, 22, 23 and 23 Corr.1, 24 and 25. The Committee's work in this period focused on two items: matters relating to the scheduling of commitments, and classification issues.

I. MATTERS RELATING TO THE SCHEDULING OF COMMITMENTS

A. INCORPORATION OF COMMITMENTS RESULTING FROM THE CURRENT SERVICES NEGOTIATIONS IN MEMBERS' SCHEDULES

2. Members addressed technical issues arising from commitments that result from current services negotiations and their relationship with existing commitments. On the basis of a Secretariat note (S/C/W/36), two scenarios were explored: "accumulation," where new commitments would complement the existing set of a Member's commitments, and "replacement," which would result in a single schedule for each Member at the end of the negotiations. Without prejudice to the ultimate legal relationship between pre-existing and new commitments, Members supported the concept of a single consolidated schedule at the end of the negotiations. It was agreed that offers should already be submitted on the basis of draft consolidated schedules. The Secretariat was requested to prepare such draft schedules for all Members except those who preferred to undertake the consolidation themselves. Members agreed that the draft schedules would not have any legal status, but would be a negotiating tool for delegations to present their offers.

B. APPROACHES TO THE SCHEDULING OF ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS UNDER ARTICLE XVIII OF THE GATS

3. Members discussed approaches to the scheduling of additional commitments under Article XVIII of the GATS. Based on a Secretariat note (S/C/W/34), several technical and systemic issues were explored, including the role of Article XVIII in relation to other provisions of the GATS and the nature of commitments that could be taken under this Article.

II. CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

4. During the reporting period, the Committee discussed new classification proposals regarding Legal Services (S/CSC/W/32 – proposal by Australia) and Computer and related Services (S/CSC/W/35 – European Communities). In addition, a proposal of MERCOSUR and Bolivia (S/CSS/W/108) on the classification of Postal and Courier Services was discussed.

5. To assist Members in taking stock of existing classification proposals and to facilitate discussion, the Secretariat was requested to prepare a compendium of these proposals (Job (02)/143).