

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED

S/NGBT/7

17 August 1995

(95-2470)

Negotiating Group on Basic Telecommunications

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF 12-13 JULY 1995

1. The Negotiating Group on Basic Telecommunications held its seventh meeting on 12-13 July 1995. The agenda for the meeting was contained in airgram WTO/AIR/124 of 28 June 1995. The Chairman introduced the agenda and noted that the item on outstanding technical and conceptual issues would be discussed in informal session.
2. Three delegations, Brazil, Singapore and Venezuela, announced that they would now be participating fully in the negotiations of the Group, rather than as observers. As a result, the number of full participants in the negotiations increased to 27¹ and the number of participants with observer status was now 30². The Chairman thanked the delegations for their decisions and encouraged other governments participating as observers also to consider joining in the negotiations.
3. The Chairman invited delegations to comment on any bilateral discussions held so far. The delegations of Australia, Canada, the European Community and its Member States, New Zealand and the United States noted that they had been holding a number of bilateral discussions of requests and offers. They also indicated that they had discussed a number of the outstanding technical and conceptual issues in bilateral meetings. The bilateral meetings were generally characterized as positive, productive and useful.
4. Under the agenda item calling for discussion of work on technical and conceptual issues, the Chairman invited delegations who had submitted new papers to introduce them. The delegation of Australia presented two papers, "An Economic Analysis of the Implications of a Trading System for International Telecommunications Services based on Trade of Termination Services" (S/NGBT/W/10) and "Trade in Telecommunications Termination Services: Measures" (S/NGBT/W/11). The delegation of New Zealand presented a paper titled "New Zealand Telecommunications: the Competition Environment" (S/NGBT/W/3/Add.2/Supp.2). Finally, the delegation of Japan presented two informal papers; one was a draft guide to scheduling and the other commented on possible additional commitments. The discussions in informal session on technical and conceptual issues focused on general regulatory issues (licensing, interconnection, competition safeguards, transparency, independent regulatory bodies, frequency and numbering, standards and type approval, tariffs and accounting rates, termination services, rights of way and planning, and universal service) and on issues related to the scheduling of commitments.

¹Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Egypt, the European Communities and their Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom), Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Japan, Korea, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United States and Venezuela.

²Bulgaria, Brunei Darussalam, China, Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Latvia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uruguay.

5. Under the agenda item on the review of participants' responses to the questionnaire on basic telecommunications, the Chairman announced that Singapore and Tunisia had submitted responses. The representative of Singapore provided a brief introduction to its response and answered some preliminary questions from participants. The Chairman thanked the delegations for submitting the responses and noted that more time would be allotted at the September meeting for questions. He also encouraged all participants and observers to continue to keep the Group informed of new developments and to submit responses to the questionnaires.

6. The Group agreed that its next meeting would be 20 September and that bilateral consultations would be held during that week. It was further agreed that an informal meeting of the Group at the senior official level would be held on 6 October during the period of TELECOM 95. The Group also agreed to a deadline of 31 July for the submission of draft offers, on the understanding that participants unable to meet this deadline should nevertheless try to submit their offers by the September meeting.

7. No additional matters were raised under other business. The Secretariat was requested to produce a draft timetable for completion of the negotiations for consideration by the Group at its next meeting and to update the tabulation of positions adopted by delegations on issues taken up in their submissions and statements (S/NGBT/W/8).