

GUIDELINES ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR
SCHEDULING OF MEETINGS OF WTO BODIES

Adopted by the General Council on 15 November 1995¹

1. The effort should be to spread out the meetings as evenly as possible. To facilitate the process the latest schedule of meetings should be made available to the Chairman when considering convening a meeting.
2. Only one Council meeting (i.e. the General Council, DSB, TPRB, and the Councils on Goods, Services and TRIPS) should be held at a time.
3. There should not be more than two simultaneous formal meetings of WTO bodies.² The need to avoid overlap with the existing schedule of meetings should be taken into consideration while convening informal meetings as well.³
4. As far as possible the calendar for the formal meetings should be fixed for the whole year. For 1996 it should be possible to establish a calendar by the end of November. To the extent possible meetings of bodies attended by the same experts from capitals should be held consecutively.
5. While informal meetings may be convened to discuss specific problems as considered necessary by the Chairman, the need to keep the number of such meetings within reasonable limits should be kept in view.
6. Informal meetings (including plurilateral meetings) should be convened after a notice of at least five working days. In urgent cases a minimum of two full working days' notice should be given.
7. Multilateral meetings should only be cancelled or postponed for reasons of overriding importance. Notice of cancellations should be provided as far in advance as possible, bearing in mind that for many meetings representatives come from capitals and that the Secretariat must often contract interpreters

¹Upon agreement on the guidelines the Chairman said that the DSB, the BOP Committee and the TMB had particular requirements for meetings and that it should therefore be understood that whilst all efforts would be made to schedule the meetings of these bodies in accordance with these guidelines the necessary flexibility would be applied in instances where this would not be possible. He also mentioned that in scheduling WTO meetings, the time table of meetings of other intergovernmental organizations in Geneva, such as UNCTAD, would be taken into account in so far as possible, bearing in mind the workloads of the respective organizations.

²For the purpose of these Guidelines, the Committees of the Plurilateral Trade Agreements, dispute settlement panels and the Appellate Body are not included.

³Meetings will be arranged in accordance with availability of conference rooms. Meetings of bodies with full membership can only be accommodated in the Council Room and Room D, unless facilities can be obtained at the CICG and until such time as the new Conference Centre is completed. Informal multilateral meetings may be accommodated in Room E if the Council Room and Room D are occupied.

well in advance of meetings. The reasons for such cancellations or postponements should be provided in the notice.

8. The Secretariat has a special responsibility for ensuring that documentation is circulated well in advance of the meeting in the three working languages. Meetings should, therefore, not be scheduled unless there is a reasonable assurance of timely availability of documentation. Documentation for informal meetings should be made available at the time they are convened.

9. These guidelines may be reviewed after one year.