

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/REG/W/63/Rev.1
25 October 2011

(11-5343)

Committee on Regional Trade Agreements

Original: English

COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

A proposal from Australia; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; European Union; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Mexico; New Zealand; Norway; the Republic of Korea; and the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu

Revision

The following communication, dated 20 October 2011 has been received from the Delegations listed above.¹

1. Ministers noted the growth and increasing prominence of RTAs in world trade. They noted with satisfaction the extensive information on RTAs made available under the Transparency Mechanism and emphasized that its further success will depend on Members' continued efforts, including submitting relevant information in a timely manner. Ministers also saw value in WTO Members assessing the systemic implications of RTAs for the multilateral trading system and the relationship between them, within the mandate of the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA).² Accordingly, Ministers directed the CRTA to undertake a work programme where Members would be assisted by factual reports to be prepared by the Secretariat, to consider the elements, practices and development aspects of RTAs. This work programme could help Members reflect on the systemic implications of RTAs for the multilateral trading system and discuss practices that can help further the objectives of the multilateral trading system. The results of this work programme will be reported to the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the WTO.

The relevant aspects of the CRTA mandate are as follows:

"Having regard to agreements^[1] which are required to be notified, as the case may be, under Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994, Article V of the General Agreement on Trade in Services or the 1979 Decision on Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries; ...

The General Council hereby *decides*: ...

1. To establish a Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, open to all Members of the WTO, with the following terms of reference:

- (d) to consider the systemic implications of such agreements and regional initiatives for the multilateral trading system and the relationship between them, and make appropriate recommendations to the General Council; ..."

¹ Please also refer to WTO Documents WT/REG/W/61 and Add.1, dated 20 and 27 September 2011.

² The CRTA mandate is attached.

[1] The term "agreements" in this Decision refers to all bilateral, regional, and plurilateral trade agreements of a preferential nature.

ANNEX

**WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION**

WT/L/127
7 February 1996

(96-0473)

COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

Decision of 6 February 1996

Having regard to agreements¹ which are required to be notified, as the case may be, under Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994, Article V of the General Agreement on Trade in Services or the 1979 Decision on Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries;

Having regard to the biennial reporting envisaged in Paragraph 11 of the Uruguay Round Understanding on the Interpretation of Article XXIV of the GATT 1994; and

Acting pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 7 of Article IV of the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO),

The General Council hereby *decides*:

- 1) To establish a Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, open to all Members of the WTO, with the following terms of reference:
 - (a) to carry out the examination of agreements in accordance with the procedures and terms of reference adopted by the Council for Trade in Goods, the Council for Trade in Services or the Committee on Trade and Development, as the case may be, and thereafter present its report to the relevant body for appropriate action;²
 - (b) to consider how the required reporting on the operation of such agreements should be carried out and make appropriate recommendations to the relevant body;
 - (c) to develop, as appropriate, procedures to facilitate and improve the examination process;

¹ The term "agreements" in this Decision refers to all bilateral, regional, and plurilateral trade agreements of a preferential nature.

² The Committee will also carry out the outstanding work of the working parties already established by the Council for Trade in Goods, the Council for Trade in Services or the Committee on Trade and Development, within the terms of reference defined for those working parties, and report to the appropriate bodies.

- (d) to consider the systemic implications of such agreements and regional initiatives for the multilateral trading system and the relationship between them, and make appropriate recommendations to the General Council; and
 - (e) to carry out any additional functions assigned to it by the General Council.
- 2) That the Committee shall report annually to the General Council on its activities.
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