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Committee on Trade and Environment

Original: Spanish

## FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT

### COMMUNICATION FROM PARAGUAY

The following communication, dated 25 October 2023, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Paraguay.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. At the Twelfth Ministerial Conference, Ministers pledged to work towards the necessary reform of the World Trade Organization.

1.2. Paraguay welcomes the discussions taking place in the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) on its functioning and the consultations held by the Chair in this respect.

1.3. Furthermore, we note the report by the Chair of the General Council [JOB/GC/349](#), which invited all bodies to consider various procedural measures, including, *inter alia*, modernizing the appearance and format of airgrams, supplementing airgrams with useful information to help with the preparation of meetings, and hyperlinking documents.

1.4. The Committee on Trade and Environment is a standing forum dedicated to dialogue among Members on the relationship between trade measures and environmental measures, as recalled in the outcome document agreed at the Twelfth Ministerial Conference.

1.5. The increasing number of formal and informal meetings at the WTO, together with the amount of information they generate on a wide variety of topics, represents a challenge for all delegations, but in particular for small delegations with limited human resources. These challenges can make it difficult for Members to participate actively in CTE meetings.

1.6. In order to address these challenges, it is proposed that consideration be given to the following areas of action, which are inspired by previous presentations in this respect, including document [WT/CTE/W/252](#), as well as by discussions in the CTE and similar work undertaken by other WTO bodies, in particular the Council for Trade in Goods and the General Council.

#### 2 PLANNING MEETINGS

2.1. The increasing number of meetings at the WTO makes it difficult for small delegations to properly follow and actively participate in them. In this regard, it is proposed that:

- a. There be annual planning for Committee meetings;
- b. If the established dates need to be amended, an explanation be included as to the reason for the change;
- c. Efforts be made to schedule thematic sessions organized within the CTE framework for the same week as formal meetings so as to make it easier for capitals to follow and participate;

- d. Where possible, the dates of meetings be coordinated with the Joint Initiatives relating to environmental issues, so as to make it easier for capitals to follow and participate.

### **3 CONVENING NOTICE**

3.1. This document is currently circulated as an "airgram". In this respect, it is proposed that:

- a. The title "Airgram" be replaced by "Convening Notice";
- b. The Convening Notice be circulated and posted on the relevant page of the Interactive Meetings Calendar 30 days before the formal meeting with the agenda items included by Members up to that date;
- c. Revised versions of the Convening Notice with elements included by Members up until the closing of the agenda be circulated and posted on the relevant page of the Interactive Meetings Calendar;
- d. The agenda close 15 days before the formal meeting;
- e. As soon as the updates to the E-Registration system (which allow Delegation Coordinators to include capital-based delegates, where appropriate) become operational, the Convening Notice be circulated exclusively on the basis of that system.

3.2. It is proposed that the Convening Notice include information on:

- a. Logistical arrangements:
  - Date and time;
  - Place (room, when available);
  - Type of participation (in-person only, hybrid or online);
  - Agenda closing date;
  - Information on registration (for international organizations with observer status); and
  - Contact details of the Chair and the Secretariat.
- b. Conduct of the meeting, including hyperlinks to:
  - The Documents Online page with all the documents relevant to the meeting;
  - Annotated agenda, expected circulation date (after the closing of the agenda) and hyperlink;
  - Rules of procedure; and
  - Any other relevant information.
- c. Proposed agenda:
  - A list of the items proposed for the agenda with hyperlinks to all relevant documents, where appropriate.

3.3. In the interests of consistency and ensuring access to previous documents, it should continue to be published with the current WTO symbol.

3.4. In the interests of accessibility, the format of the document must be in line with that of other WTO documents.

#### **4 FOLLOW-UP NOTE BY THE CHAIR**

4.1. In order to facilitate the follow-up to both formal and informal meetings, a document summarizing the subsequent steps agreed on could be very useful. In this respect, it is proposed that a follow-up note be published, under the responsibility of the Chair, setting out agreed deadlines and actions.

4.2. This document should be assigned a WTO document symbol and uploaded to Documents Online.

4.3. The document should be published as soon as possible and preferably within five working days after the meeting in all the official WTO languages.

4.4. To maintain and access this document:

- a. Following the meeting, an email will be sent to delegates when the document becomes available, with a hyperlink to the page of the Interactive Meetings Calendar for the meeting being followed up on;
- b. The Secretariat will keep all the information and dates contained in this document updated, through any necessary revisions;
- c. Given that the content and dates may change, and to ensure ease of access to the information, only the most recent version of this document should be available through the hyperlink provided;
- d. Previous versions of this document should remain in Documents Online in case any delegation wishes to consult them;
- e. In order to ensure easy access to information and its integration, the most recent copy of the document should also have a hyperlink to the Interactive Meetings Calendar page for the next meeting, clearly indicating that it is a follow-up to the previous meeting; and

4.5. The information covered by this document could include:

- a. The dates of subsequent CTE meetings already scheduled;
- b. How to add items to the agenda of the next formal meeting;
- c. The date on which the agenda of the next formal meeting will be closed;
- d. The date on which the Convening Notice for the next formal meeting will be circulated;
- e. The date on which the annotated agenda for the next formal meeting will be circulated;
- f. A reminder of the items that the CTE has agreed to continue to discuss;
- g. To ensure transparency, the document must contain the footnotes needed to explain, where appropriate, any changes that have been made since the first revision through the updates provided for in paragraph 4.4 (including, but not limited to, any notifications circulated in accordance with document WT/L/106 that explain any changes to the dates of the formal meetings scheduled); and
- h. Where appropriate, any other information - including on deadlines or processes - that helps delegates to participate in the CTE.

4.6. The document should include hyperlinks to all WTO documents to which reference is made.

## 5 MINUTES

5.1. To facilitate the follow-up of formal meetings, the reports shall be circulated within three weeks after the CTE meeting and not later than the notice convening the following meeting.<sup>1</sup>

## 6 DIGITAL TOOLS

6.1. E-Registration - The E-Registration tool is extremely useful for identifying Geneva-based delegates and the issues they are responsible for, as well as capital-based delegates on the basis of its recent improvements. In this regard, it is proposed that:

- a. Members be reminded of the need to keep their delegates' details in E-Registration up to date;
- b. As soon as the updates to the E-Registration system (which allow Delegation Coordinators to include capital-based delegates, where appropriate) become operational, all documents emanating from the CTE be circulated exclusively on the basis of that system.

6.2. eAgenda - This tool is very useful for delegations as it makes it possible to prepare more effectively for meetings and to obtain a more or less accurate transcript of Members' statements. It should also be noted that Committees using this type of tool require on average relatively less time for the preparation of minutes. In this regard, it is proposed that:

- a. eAgenda be used for formal CTE meetings.

6.3. The use of eAgenda should not replace the reports of the CTE, but would facilitate, *inter alia*, the preparation of meetings and delegates' informal consultations, as well as the work of the Secretariat.

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<sup>1</sup> WT/L/452.