

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Negotiating Group on Market Access

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TARIFF AND TRADE DATA NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Communication from the United States

The following communication, dated 1 July 2002, has been received from the Permanent Mission of the United States.

I. INTRODUCTION

The United States proposes that the Market Access Negotiating Group follow up on the April Tariff Seminar with a more detailed discussion on the tariff and trade data needs of Members. An early exchange of views on data needs is important for practical reasons in order to carry out the Doha mandate on Non-Agricultural Market Access. As part of the work envisioned, Members will want to assess the current availability of both tariff and trade information as well as the software “tools” to analyze the underlying data. In this submission, the United States sets out its views on data requirements for future work of the negotiating group, including establishing a common set of data for use in tariff negotiations as well as addressing data shortfalls. We also have provided a preliminary analysis of the types of software tools available, in order to facilitate a discussion of their respective benefits and deficiencies.

II. DATA REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS

In order to begin the necessary analytical work to support the negotiations and for governments to assess interests, opportunities, and priorities, it is important that Members have access to a common, consolidated source of current applied and bound tariffs and trade statistics. To this end, the United States applauds the WTO Secretariat’s preparation and Members’ decision in June to disseminate the tariff bindings or Consolidated Tariff Schedule (CTS).

Importantly, paragraph 16 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration states that “modalities to be agreed will include appropriate studies and capacity building measures to assist least developed countries to participate effectively in the negotiations.” Such work will require data on current market access conditions, i.e., current applied tariffs, in addition to bound rates and recent import statistics. Securing authorized tariff and trade data from national sources is necessary so that Members may examine market opportunities, disparities between bound and applied rates, and their own tariff profiles.

Members should also discuss a common set of data for use in tariff negotiations. As a starting point for this discussion, Members should have a data set containing tariffs and trade for the most recent period that reflect as nearly as possible current market conditions. Therefore, the United States recommends the negotiating group discuss and set a deadline for submission of year 2000 applied tariffs and 2000 import data.

III. SOFTWARE TOOLS

Several international organizations have developed analytical tools for different functions and audiences, including identifying export interests and potential export markets, and analyzing the domestic economic impact of tariff reductions. To facilitate Members' review of the various software tools currently available, the United States has compiled a list and preliminary assessment of their uses (see attached survey). While this list is not exhaustive, it is a starting point from which Members might take stock and determine which tool or set of tools best serves their needs. To make full use of the various software programs already undertaken, we propose that the WTO Secretariat prepare a short background document for the Negotiating Group's consideration at its next meeting on the availability and application of software tools.

We encourage the WTO Secretariat to take advantage of existing software tools. These tools would be useful in the evaluation of modalities but are not a substitute for the research and trade negotiating data required when Members move on to exchanging tariff schedules. While these systems may serve analytical needs as the Negotiating Group examines modalities, their utility is linked to the comprehensiveness of the underlying data. It is for these reasons that the WTO Secretariat should concentrate its efforts on collecting and updating the Integrated Database (IDB), the linchpin in the effectiveness of the other tools.

IV. ADDRESSING DATA SHORTFALLS

Members need to take action to fill the data gaps in the IDB so that our work can progress. As of June 2002, the official IDB data set is incomplete. There were tariff and/or import submissions from 92 Members and four acceding countries. In some cases, both recent tariff and trade data have been provided, but in many cases only one or the other is available, or the import and tariff data vary in a year.

Some of the missing tariff and trade data are available in regional data banks or other sources but require action by the WTO Member before the WTO Secretariat can serve as a collection point. In some instances, it merely requires a Member to make or authorize the legal transfer of data. This may include a Member formally and expeditiously authorizing the FTAA or APEC Secretariat or other international organization to release its tariff and trade data to the WTO. The WTO Secretariat identified many of these organizations in the four regional analyses it did in 2001 (see G/MA/IDB/W/10). Building on the WTO Secretariat's experience, this transfer process can be facilitated by designating an in-country point of contact. The lack of data submitted by Members will only serve to slow down the analytical work that is required to advance the negotiations, which is an area of work identified as a priority by developing country trading partners.

In some cases, Members' tariff schedules and trade data have been collected by the Trade Policy Review (TPR) Division, and despite a request to these governments from the Statistics Division to authorize the transfer of the data to the IDB, some Members have not acted. To close this gap, we propose that the Chair, aided by the Secretariat, compile information on TPR data available, with the aim of adding such data to the IDB before the end of the year.

As the focal point for the market access commitments and repository of tariff information legally required by Members, the WTO is well poised to house the most comprehensive official tariff and trade data available. Not only are the data necessary to provide developing countries with the appropriate analytical tools needed to conduct detailed negotiations, but they also are an obligation of all WTO Members. If Members face legitimate technical assistance problems such as translation, technical capacity, etc., the United States is committed to exploring how it may help, but Members should define the specific problem as well as identify a capital-based contact for direct interaction with the Secretariat.

V. CONCLUSION

Members are well positioned to take advantage of the plethora of software tools available. However, there remain critical gaps in recent tariff and trade data submissions by Members to the IDB, which ultimately affect the usefulness of software tools available. For all Members to actively participate in the negotiating process, it is our responsibility to ensure that all 144 Members' tariff and trade data are made available as soon as possible. To that end, the WTO Secretariat should take stock of the various software programs developed by international institutions, but focus its efforts on processing and updating the IDB. The quality of the debate surrounding market access negotiations is certain to be enhanced if the best data are collected and disseminated to all Members.

The United States proposes the following actions:

- 1) That the Negotiating Group discuss and set a deadline for submission of a common data set for the most recent period, e.g., 2000 tariff data to include bound and applied rates, in addition to 2000 import data.
- 2) That Members agree to address data shortfalls before the end of 2002 by (1) providing legal authorization to other organizations to release data to the WTO where it is available, and (2) asking the Chair to facilitate the expansion of the IDB by working with Members to add their TPR data.
- 3) That the WTO Secretariat prepare a short background document for the Negotiating Group's consideration at its next meeting on the availability and application of software tools and focus its efforts on data collection.

Data Systems	Agency or Institution	Summary	Cost/Public Availability/ WTO "Official" Data Status	Data Type & Source	HS Product Detail	Country Coverage	Delivery System
World Trade Atlas	<i>Global Trade Information Service (Private Sector)</i>	Trade value and volume viewing system** for a limited set of countries each purchased separately. Very user-friendly and contains some built-in calculations such as shares and growth.	This is a trade data only system, which does not use official WTO data. The system is publicly available at a cost.	(Individual Country Imports & Export data)	National Tariff Line Detail (Greater than HS6)	Up to 44 countries (purchased separately).	CDs or Web
Global Trade Atlas	<i>Global Trade Information Service (Private Sector)</i>	Trade value and volume viewing system** for a "global" set of countries. Very user-friendly and contains some built-in calculations such as shares and growth.	Does not have tariff data. Trade data is not official WTO. The system is publicly available at a cost.	(Individual Country Imports & Export data)	National Tariff Line Detail (Greater than HS6)	COMTRADE covers up to 150 countries, usually there are 100 reporting countries for any given year.	CDs or Web
Market Access Maps	<i>International Trade Centre (ITC-Geneva)</i>	This is a point and click web-based system for bilateral tariff and trade value and volume analysis. The system uses UNCTAD's list of NTMs which includes measures such as SPS, TBT, environment, and anti-dumping.	Does not use official WTO data nor contain bindings. The system is available to the public for a cost.	COMTRADE (Imports & Exports)	National Tariff Line Detail (Greater than HS6)	223 exporting countries, 137 importing countries.	Stand-alone tool
Trade Map	<i>International Trade Centre (ITC-Geneva)</i>	Primarily a tool for identifying trade interests and for trade promotion. The user chooses a country of origin and HS product to examine target export markets.	Does not use official WTO data. The system is available to the public for a cost. The package includes training but timing is an issue.	Imports and Exports from COMTRADE	HS 6-digit	Over 180 countries and territories.	Web
TRAINS	<i>UNCTAD</i>	This is primarily an applied tariff rate viewing** system. The system can calculate tariff averages and create aggregations across countries. Trains can output its data.	Does not contain official WTO tariff or trade data. The applied tariffs in this system are used as an input to WITS and ITC's products. The system contains no bindings. Trains is available to the public at a cost.	Imports and Tariffs, including preferences	Imports - HS 6-digit; Tariffs - national line level	CDs, limited system is available on the Web.	CDs or Web

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APEC Database	<i>APEC</i>	This is an easy to use Web-based system for viewing a particular tariff line for countries in the APEC region. The system cannot calculate tariff averages or create aggregations across countries. The APEC system cannot output its data.	Does not have official WTO data but is free to the public.	Imports and Tariffs including preferences	National Tariff Line Detail (Greater than HS6)	All APEC Members.	Web
FTAA's Hemispheric Data Base	<i>The Inter-American Development Bank</i>	This a data viewer** to look at tariffs and trade values and volume in the Western Hemisphere. Would be very helpful in detailed tariff negotiating phase. www.ftaa-alca.org	Does contain official FTAA data but will only cover the hemisphere. Website version is free to the public.	Imports and Tariffs, including preferences	National Tariff Line Detail (Greater than HS6)	Maximum 34 FTAA participants when complete. Currently between 20 and 30 reporters.	At one time data was available on the Web.
Consolidated Tariff Schedules	<i>WTO</i>	This is WTO's official tariff binding database. It has recently been released to WTO Members.	CTS is free for Members but not publicly available.	Tariff Bindings, Ag Commitments in TRQ, price supports, export subsidies	National Tariff Line Detail (Greater than HS6)	All WTO members.	Web provides downloadable Access databases
The Integrated Data Base or "IDB"	<i>WTO</i>	This is the WTO's official applied tariff database. The IDB site disseminates Access files by country with tariff rates, trade values and volumes. The WTO recently created new "user friendly" dataview to allow novice users to look at tariff lines and averages for a particular country and year.	IDB is free for Members, but is primarily a series of country by country files. It is not publicly available.	Imports, Exports, and Tariffs	National Tariff Line Detail (Greater than HS6)	Fifty percent of all WTO members, not all submissions are current.	Web provides downloadable Access databases
WITS	<i>World Bank</i>	This is a research and negotiation software tool with both tariff rate and trade data .	The system is free for WTO Members. It has official IDB data and will include WTO bindings. Access is limited to Members and the World Bank.	Imports and Exports from COMTRADE; Plus tariffs including preferences from Trains	Imports - HS 6-digit; Tariffs - national line level	COMTRADE covers up to 150 countries, usually there are 100 reporting countries for any given year.	CDs or Web

Data Systems	Agency or Institution	Summary	Cost/Public Availability/ WTO "Official" Data Status	Data Type & Source	HS Product Detail	Country Coverage	Delivery System
OECD query and reporting system	<i>OECD</i>	This is a research and software tool with both tariff rate and trade value information data. Query and reporting system at aggregated chapter level.	Available to OECD Members. Intention to extend to non members in future. Not publicly available.	OECD Foreign Trade Statistics database with UNCTAD tariffs. No preferences but intention to do so.	Imports- 98 trade flows, applied and bound rates post UR, product aggregation at HS2,4 and 6	Does not contain official IDB data. Covers OECD countries' trade with world. Country groupings.	CD rom
Data Web	<i>U.S. International Trade Commission</i>	Data Web provides several tools including a query-output* system for U.S. trade value and volume data with the ability to create custom aggregates. Dataweb also provides a downloadable tariff database (HS-8 digit) and a U.S. legal text of tariffs in a dataviewing system**.	USG is the primary user, but Dataweb is publicly available.	U.S. data on imports, exports, and tariffs (including preferences)	Down to the HS 10-digit (statistical) for U.S. tariff nomenclature	United States only.	Web-based Query Output

* A query-output system allows the user to "request" a particular grouping of data (by countries/regions, product groups, time period). The system then returns a listing of the data requested.

**A data viewing system allows the user to pick a data item, such as a product item, and the system lists to the screen the corresponding information, such as a tariff rate by country.