

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 4222]

Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation; Notice of Meeting

The Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation will meet in the Department of State, 2201 "C" Street NW., Washington, DC, February 24–25, 2003, in Conference Room 1107. Prior notification and a valid photo are mandatory for entrance into the building. One week before the meeting, members of the public planning to attend must notify Gloria Walker, Office of the Historian (202–663–1124) to provide relevant dates of birth, Social Security numbers, and telephone numbers.

The Committee will meet in open session from 1:30 p.m. through 3 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 2003, to discuss declassification and transfer of Department of State electronic records to the National Archives and Records Administration and the status of the Foreign Relations series. The remainder of the Committee's sessions from 3:15 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 2003, and 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Tuesday, February 25, 2003, will be closed in accordance with section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92–463). The agenda calls for discussions of agency declassification decisions concerning the Foreign Relations series and other declassification issues. These are matters not subject to public disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(1) and the public interest requires that such activities be withheld from disclosure.

Questions concerning the meeting should be directed to Marc J. Susser, Executive Secretary, Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, Department of State, Office of the Historian, Washington, DC, 20520, telephone (202) 663–1123, (e-mail history@state.gov).

Dated: January 21, 2003.

Marc J. Susser,

Executive Secretary, Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, Department of State.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES
TRADE REPRESENTATIVE**Request for Comments on the Operation and Implementation of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade**

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Request for comments on the operation and implementation of the World Trade Organization's agreement on technical barriers to trade.

SUMMARY: The interagency Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) is seeking public comment on the operation and implementation of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). The WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade, in which the United States is represented, is obliged to conclude a review of the Agreement no later than the end of 2003. The TBT Agreement disciplines the development and application of standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures to prevent unnecessary obstacles to international trade. The text of the Agreement is available at <http://www.wto.org>.

DATES: Written comments are due by noon Friday, February 28.

ADDRESSES: *Submissions by electronic mail:* FR0066@ustr.gov.

Submissions by facsimile: Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, at 202/395–6143.

The public is strongly encouraged to submit documents electronically rather than by facsimile. (See requirements for submissions below.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For procedural questions concerning written comments, contact Gloria Blue, (202) 395–3475. Further information on the World Trade Organization and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade can be obtained via Internet at the WTO Web site <http://www.wto.org> and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative at <http://www.ustr.gov>. Questions on the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and its review should be directed to Suzanne Troje, Director for Technical Barriers to Trade, at the Office of the United States Trade Representative (202) 395–3063.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**1. Background**

The TPSC is seeking public comment on the operation and implementation of the WTO TBT Agreement to inform the U.S. position and approach to the Third Triennial Review. Article 15.4 of the Agreement requires such a review and

this will be the third conducted by the TBT Committee since the inception of the World Trade Organization in 1995. Article 15.4 requires the Committee to:

review the operation and implementation of this Agreement, including the provisions relating to transparency, with a view to recommending an adjustment of the rights and obligations of this Agreement where necessary to ensure mutual economic advantage and balance of rights and obligations, without prejudice to the provisions of Article 12 (Special and Differential Treatment for Developing Country Members). Having regard, inter alia, to the experience gained in the implementation of the Agreement, the Committee shall, where appropriate, submit proposals for amendments to the text of this Agreement to the Council for Trade in Goods.

The results of the earlier reviews are available at www.wto.org: G/TBT/5 (19 November 1997), First Triennial Review of the Operation and Implementation of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, and G/TBT/9 (13 November 2000), for the Second Triennial Review.

Since the conclusion of the Second Triennial Review, the Committee has had follow-up discussions on technical assistance and labeling:

Technical Assistance: G/TBT/W/178, Questionnaire for a Survey to Assist Developing Country Members to Identify and Prioritize their Specific Needs in the TBT-Field was developed by the TBT Committee with a view to eliciting information on the priority needs of Members. To date, some 46 WTO members have provided a response. Although the responses are not publically available, the WTO Secretariat presented some information on them in G/TBT/W/186 (14 October 2002). In March 2003 the Committee will host a workshop on technical assistance to discuss issues arising from the survey results and Committee discussions. The Second Triennial Review requires the Committee to assess its progress in implementing its work program in the context of the Third Triennial Review.

Labeling: The Second Triennial Review, under "other elements" noted that many trade issues were raised at meetings of the Committee concerning labeling and reiterated the importance of compliance with the Agreement. The Committee has held informal discussions largely on the basis of submissions by Members: G/TBT/W/150 (European Commission), G/TBT/W/162 (Switzerland), G/TBT/W/165 (United States), G/TBT/W/174/Rev.1 (Canada), G/TBT/W/175 (European Commission), and G/TBT/W/176 (Japan). At the request of the Committee and to provide a factual background for its future