

## **Saudi Arabia's Accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Adherence to the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade**

Saudi Arabia will comply with all obligations under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade from the date of accession without recourse to any transition period. To implement these obligations and additional commitments, Saudi Arabia has enacted new legislation and established new institutions and procedures to ensure transparency and non-discrimination, and to avoid the creation of unnecessary barriers to international trade as follows:

- Saudi Arabia issued the Technical Directive of the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO) on 18 July 2000, and amended on 19 July 2005, as the basis of the new, WTO consistent system.
- Saudi Arabia established procedures to ensure that public notice is given of proposed standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures, and an opportunity to comment provided on the drafts. These include:
  - the establishment of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as the authority responsible for making notifications to the WTO;
  - the establishment in SASO of a single contact point for information (Enquiry Point) with the commitment that draft regulations will be available on its website ([www.saso.org.sa](http://www.saso.org.sa)), including an English version, by the end of 2005;
  - the mandate that SASO would follow the Code of Good Practice for the preparation, adoption and application of standards;
  - the establishment of a non-discriminatory and cost-based fee structure for assessing the conformity of products; and
  - the application of national treatment and non-discrimination with respect to products in the context of development and application of technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures.
- Saudi Arabia also has committed to remove the mandatory, pre-market approval requirements for imports (the "International Conformity Certification Program" or "ICCP") and to implement a non-discriminatory, post-market surveillance mechanism applicable to both foreign and domestic products at no cost to suppliers. Information on this new system will be available on the Ministry of Commerce website (which is the oversight authority).
- Saudi Arabia also eliminated its prohibition on importing food products which had less than half of their remaining shelf-life. Instead of imposing government-mandated expiration periods on food products, Saudi Arabia has moved to the acceptance of internationally-recognized manufacturer-determined use-by dates, with the exception of certain perishable foods and baby foods.

September 9, 2005