

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED

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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

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REQUEST FOR OBSERVER STATUS BY THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF LEGAL METROLOGY (OIML)

The following communication has been received from the Director of the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) requesting observer status in the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade.

Background

1. The International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) is an intergovernmental organization established more than forty years ago with the aim of coordinating, harmonizing and developing the legal metrology activities of its members, i.e. the regularity controls applying to measuring instruments used in the fields of trade, health, safety and environment.
2. In this connection, the main task of the OIML is to harmonize the national legal metrology regulations; this activity contributes to the elimination of technical barriers to trade concerning not only the measuring instruments themselves but also many products and services of which the commercial value is fixed on the basis of quantitative and qualitative measurements.
3. This harmonization is obtained through the development and the publication of "OIML International Recommendations" which, for given categories of measuring instruments, specify the metrological performances to be met and the testing procedures.
4. Following our cooperation with the former GATT, these OIML International Recommendations were considered as "International Standards" in the framework of the "GATT Code of Standards".
5. The development of OIML International Recommendations is made in close cooperation with other international organizations, in particular the standardization bodies which are ISO and IEC; cooperation agreements with ISO and IEC aim at eliminating divergences and redundancies with the possibility of mutual references and, when appropriate, of developing joint papers.
6. I would like also to point out that OIML activity is carried out without discrimination concerning the various countries of the world which may join the OIML as full Member States (and thus actively participate in our work) or as Corresponding Members for those countries which cannot yet fully participate in this work. OIML presently includes almost 100 Member States and Corresponding Members. In addition, through its cooperation with several regional organizations, many other countries are kept informed of OIML activities.
7. We have also recently established a system for issuing conformity certificates to patterns of measuring instruments which comply with our International Recommendations; this Certificate System aims at reducing the repetition of national testing through a voluntary acceptance of test results already obtained in other Member States.
8. Last but not least, we have an activity in favour of developing countries in order to assist them in the establishment of appropriate metrological infrastructures.