

Committee on Regional Trade Agreements

**REPORT (2008) OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS
TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

Chairman: Mr. Detlev Brauns (Germany)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its first meeting in April 2008, the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA) elected Mr. Detlev Brauns (Germany) as Chairman of the CRTA.
2. During 2008, the Committee held three sessions (in April, September and November). The minutes of those meetings are listed in Attachment 1. Three sessions are foreseen in 2009.

II. OBSERVER STATUS

3. The Committee agreed to continue the granting of observer status in the CRTA to the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), on an *ad hoc* basis. No decision was taken with respect to the requests for observer status listed in document WT/REG/W/11/Add.3, pending the definition of guidelines by the General Council.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

4. As of 1 November 2008, 418 regional trade agreements (RTAs) have been notified to the GATT/WTO, 227 of which are currently in force.¹ Of the agreements in force, 143 were notified under GATT Article XXIV; 27 under the Enabling Clause², and 57 under GATS Article V.
5. During 2008, the Secretariat distributed factual presentations of 23 RTAs (counting goods and services separately), 21 of which were used as the basis for RTAs' consideration in the CRTA during 2008.³ A total of 33 RTAs have been considered under the Transparency Mechanism since its adoption in December 2006.⁴ There is a remaining backlog of 91 RTAs, comprised of 46 RTAs for which the factual presentation is under preparation and 45 RTAs for which the factual presentation is on hold (see Attachment 2).
6. According to paragraph 22 of the TM, the Secretariat is to prepare a factual abstract for those RTAs for which the CRTA had concluded the factual examination by 31 December 2006 and for RTAs notified to the WTO under the Enabling Clause. Nineteen factual abstracts have been prepared and placed on the WTO website; 32 are still awaiting comments from the parties, and the remaining 24 are under preparation (see Attachment 3).

¹ These figures correspond to notifications of new RTAs, as well as accessions to existing RTAs.

² *Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries*, Decision of the GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES of 28 November 1979.

³ The FTA between Egypt and Turkey was considered in the Committee on Trade and Development. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) will be considered in the next Session of the CRTA.

⁴ 32 have been considered in the CRTA and one in the CTD.

IV. EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT

7. Paragraph 1 of the TM provides for Members participating in new negotiations and parties to a newly signed RTA to provide information to the Secretariat, to be posted on the WTO website. In 2008, a total of 4 early announcements have been received from Members, 3 for RTAs under negotiation and one for newly signed RTAs (see Attachment 4).

V. SUBSEQUENT NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING

8. Paragraph 14 of the TM provides for changes affecting the implementation of an RTA, or the operation of an already implemented RTA to be notified as soon as possible after such changes occur. Such communications are to be made available on the WTO website. As of 1 November 2008, three notifications made during 2008 have been received and posted on the WTO website.⁵

9. Paragraph 15 of the TM provides for parties to an RTA to submit a short written report on the realization of the liberalization commitments in the RTA as originally notified at the end of the RTA's implementation period. No such reports were submitted during 2008.

VI. DATABASE ON RTAS

10. Paragraph 21 of the TM provides for the Secretariat to establish and maintain an updated electronic database on individual RTAs. At the Committee's 50th Session, a representative of the Secretariat made a presentation on the current phase of the database. Members have been given access to the database via the Members' website to enable them to test it and provide comments before it is made available to the public. At its 51st Session, the Committee agreed to make the database available to the public.

VII. PROCEDURES TO IMPROVE AND FACILITATE THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

11. No discussion took place on this item.

VIII. SYSTEMIC IMPLICATIONS OF REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS AND INITIATIVES FOR THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM

12. During the course of 2008 the Chairman held informal consultations on the issue of RTAs involving non-Members. Further consultations are ongoing.

IX. FINAL REMARKS

13. Although considerable progress has been made in the preparation of factual presentations, the Committee continues to experience some difficulties in adhering to its work programme. This is due to a number of factors: delays in the receipt of statistical data from parties, data discrepancies in Members' submissions, and delays in the receipt of comments from parties. The Secretariat is working actively with the parties concerned in an effort to overcome these difficulties.

⁵ Japan-Singapore , EFTA-Singapore and EFTA-Turkey FTAs.

ATTACHMENT 1

Minutes of the Meetings held in 2008

Forty-Ninth Session – 21-22 April 2008

WT/REG/M/49

WT/REG208/M/1	United States – Morocco, Goods and Services
WT/REG227/M/1	Panama – Singapore, Goods and Services
WT/REG226/M/1	European Communities – Albania, Goods

Fiftieth Session – 18-19 September 2008

WT/REG/M/50

WT/REG228/M/1	India – Singapore, Goods and Services
WT/REG229/M/1 + WT/REG229/M/1/Rev.1	Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement between Brunei Darussalam, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore, Goods and Services
WT/REG230/M/1	Chile – China, Goods
WT/REG196/M/1	El Salvador – Panama, Goods and Services
WT/REG238/M/1	Protocol of Montevideo on Trade in Services in the MERCOSUR

Fifty-First Session – 27-28 November 2008 (to be issued)

WT/REG/M/51

WT/REG198/M/1	Japan – Mexico, Goods and Services
WT/REG234/M/1	Japan – Chile, Goods and Services
WT/REG215/M/1	Jordan – Singapore, Goods and Services
WT/REG201/M/1	EFTA States – Tunisia, Goods
WT/REG232/M/1	EFTA States – Egypt, Goods

ATTACHMENT 2

A. RTAs in force for which the "factual examination" was completed prior to the adoption of the TM Decision (66):

ANZCERTA (S)	EC-FYROM (G)	Japan-Singapore (G&S)
Canada-Chile (G&S)	EC-Israel (G)	Kyrgyz Rep.-Armenia (G)
Canada-Costa Rica (G)	EC-Jordan (G)	Kyrgyz Rep.-Moldova (G)
Canada-Israel (G)	EC-Mexico (G)	MERCOSUR (G)
CARICOM (S)	EC-Morocco (G)	Mexico-Israel (G)
Chile-Costa Rica (G&S)	EC-Tunisia (G)	NAFTA (G&S)
Chile-El Salvador (G&S)	EC-Turkey (G)	New Zealand-Singapore (G&S)
Chile-Mexico (G&S)	EFTA (S)	Norway-Faroe Isl. (G)
Chile- Korea (G&S)	EFTA-Croatia (G)	Singapore-Australia (G&S)
China-Hong Kong, China (G&S)	EFTA-FYROM (G)	Switzerland-Faroe Isl. (G)
China-Macao, China (G&S)	EFTA-Israel (G)	Turkey-Croatia (G)
EC (Treaty of Rome) (S)	EFTA-Jordan (G)	Turkey-FYROM (G)
EC-P. of Andorra (G)	EFTA-Mexico (G)	Turkey-Israel (G)
EC-Chile (G)	EFTA-Morocco (G)	United States-Chile (G&S)
EC-Croatia (G)	EFTA-Singapore (G&S)	United States-Jordan (G&S)
EC Enlargement (15) (G&S)	European Economic Area (S)	United States-Singapore (G&S)
EC Enlargement (25) (G) ¹	Georgia-Armenia (G)	

B. RTAs for which a factual presentation has been distributed (35):

Armenia-Moldova (G)	EFTA-Egypt (G)	Panama-Singapore (G&S)
Australia-Thailand (G&S)	EFTA-Tunisia (G)	SACU (G)
Chile-China (G)	Egypt-Turkey (G) *	SADC (G)
Chile-Japan (G&S)	India-Singapore (G&S)	Thailand-New Zealand (G)
Chile-Korea (G)	Japan-Mexico (G&S)	Trans-Pacific SEP (G&S)
EC-Albania (G)	Jordan-Singapore (G&S)	Turkey-Morocco (G)
EC-Chile (S)	MERCOSUR (S)	US-Australia (G&S)
EFTA-Chile (G&S)	Panama-El Salvador (G&S)	US-Morocco (G&S)

C. RTAs for which a factual presentation is under preparation (46):

Armenia-Ukraine (G)	EFTA-SACU (G)	Kyrgyz Republic-Ukraine (G)
Brunei Darussalam-Japan (G&S)	El Salvador-Mexico (G&S)	Mexico-Nicaragua (G&S)
Chile-Panama (G&S)	GCC (G) *	Pakistan-China (G)
Costa Rica-Mexico (G&S)	Georgia-Ukraine (G)	Pakistan-Malaysia (G&S) *
Dominican Rep.-Central America-United States (CAFTA-DR) (G&S)	Guatemala-Mexico (G&S)	Pakistan-Sri Lanka (G) *
EC 25 (S)	Honduras-Mexico (G&S)	Turkey-Albania (G)
EC 27 (G&S)	Japan-Indonesia (G&S)	Turkey-Tunisia (G)
EC-Egypt (G)	Japan-Malaysia (G&S)	Ukraine-FYROM (G)
EC-South Africa (G)	Japan-Thailand (G&S)	Ukraine-Moldova (G)
EFTA-Korea (G&S)	Korea-Singapore (G&S)	United States-Bahrain (G&S)

D. RTAs for which the factual presentation is on hold (45)²:

Armenia-Kazakhstan (G)	EC-Palestinian Authority (G)	Pan-Arab Free Trade Area (G)
Armenia-Russian Federation (G)	EFTA-Lebanon (G)	PICTA (G) *
Armenia-Turkmenistan (G)	EFTA-Mexico (S)	SAFTA (G) *
ASEAN-China (S)	EFTA-Palestinian Authority (G)	Thailand-New Zealand (S)
CEFTA Enlargement (G)	Georgia- Azerbaijan (G)	Turkey-Bosnia and Herzegovina (G)
CEFTA-Accession of Croatia (G)	Georgia-Kazakhstan (G)	Turkey-Palestinian Authority (G)
CIS (G)	Georgia-Russian Federation (G)	Turkey-Syria (G)
Common Economic Zone (G)	Georgia-Turkmenistan (G)	Ukraine-Azerbaijan (G)
EAEC (G)	Iceland-Faroe Islands (G&S)	Ukraine-Belarus (G)

¹ Once a satisfactory resolution of outstanding issues is reached, the factual examination of this agreement will be deemed concluded.

² Includes RTAs with non-Members and RTAs covering trade in services for which specific commitments have yet to be agreed between the parties.

EC-Algeria (G)	India-Bhutan (G) *	Ukraine-Kazakhstan (G)
EC-Bosnia (G)	Kyrgyz Republic-Kazakhstan (G)	Ukraine-Russian Federation (G)
EC-CARIFORUM (G&S)	EC-Montenegro (G)	Ukraine-Tajikistan (G)
	Kyrgyz Republic-Russian Federation (G)	Ukraine-Turkmenistan (G)
EC-Faroe Islands (G)	Kyrgyz Republic-Uzbekistan (G)	Ukraine-Uzbekistan (G)
EC-Lebanon (G)		
EC-Mexico (S)		

* The Committee on Trade and Development, convening in dedicated session, is the responsible body for these RTAs.

ATTACHMENT 3

A. RTAs for which a factual abstract has been completed (19):

Canada-Costa Rica (G)	EC-Jordan (G)	New Zealand-Singapore (G)
Canada-Israel (G)	EC-Mexico (G)	Singapore-Australia (G)
Chile-Costa Rica (G)	EC-Turkey (G)	Switzerland-Faroe Islands (G)
Chile-Mexico (G)	Faroe Islands-Norway (G)	Turkey-Croatia (G)
China-Macao, China (G)	Japan-Singapore (G)	United States-Singapore (G)
EC-FYROM (G)	Kyrgyz Republic-Moldova (G)	United States-Jordan (G)
EC-Israel (G)		

B. RTAs for which a factual abstract has been sent for comments (32):

APTA-Accession of China(G)	EC-Morocco (G)	Israel-Mexico (G)
ASEAN-China (G)	EC-Tunisia (G)	India-Sri Lanka (G)
Canada-Chile (G)	ECOWAS (G)	Kyrgyz Republic-Armenia (G)
Chile-El Salvador (G)	EFTA-Croatia (G)	MERCOSUR (G)
China-Hong Kong, China (G)	EFTA-FYROM (G)	MSG (G)
COMESA (G)	EFTA-Israel (G)	NAFTA (G)
EAC (G)	EFTA-Jordan (G)	SAPTA (G)
EC 15 (G)	EFTA-Mexico (G)	Turkey-FYROM (G)
EC-Andorra (G)	EFTA- Morocco(G)	Turkey- Israel (G)
EC-Chile (G)	EFTA-Singapore (G)	United States-Chile (G)
EC-Croatia (G)	Georgia-Armenia (G)	

C. RTAs for which a factual abstract is in preparation (24):

Canada-Chile (S)	China-Macao, China (S)	Korea-Chile (S)
CARICOM (S)	EC (Treaty of Rome) (S)	NAFTA(S)
CEMAC (G)	EC 15 (S)	New Zealand-Singapore (S)
ANZCERTA (S)	EC 25 (G)	Singapore-Australia (S)
Chile-Costa Rica (S)	EEA (S)	United States-Chile (S)
Chile-El Salvador (S)	EFTA (S)	United States-Jordan (S)
Chile-Mexico (S)	EFTA-Singapore (S)	United States-Singapore (S)
China-Hong Kong, China (S)	Japan-Singapore (S)	WAEMU/UEMOA (G)

**ATTACHMENT 4
Early Announcements**

Agreement	Neg/Sign Date	Website	Date announced by Parties
Signed			
Australia - Chile	30-Jul-08	http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/chile/fta/index.html http://www.direcon.cl/pdf/Nov19_TLC%20Australia%20para%20Web_.pdf	13-Nov-08
Canada - EFTA	26-Jan-08	http://www.efta.int/content/free-trade/fta-countries/canada http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/fta-agr-acc.aspx?lang=en	29-Jul-08
United States - Peru Trade Promotion Agreement	12-Apr-06	http://www.tlcperu-eeuu.gov.pe/index.php http://www.tlcperu-eeuu.gov.pe/index.php	16-Nov-07
United States - Panama	28-Jun-07	http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Panama_FTA/Draft_Text/Section_Index.html http://www.mici.gov.pa/Tpc/Texto%20del%20tlc.php	11-Sep-07
United States - Oman	19-Jan-06	http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Oman_FTA/Final_Text/Section_Index.html	11-Sep-07
Rep. of Korea - United States	30-Jun-07	http://www.mofat.go.kr/mofat/fta/eng_0707/eng_list.htm http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Republic_of_Korea_FTA/Draft_Text/Section_Index.html	10-Jul-07
Japan - Philippines	09-Sep-06	http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/philippine/epa0609/index.html	02-Jul-07
Japan - Thailand *	03-Apr-07	http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/thailand/epa0704/index.html	02-Jul-07
Japan - Chile *	27-Mar-07	http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/fta/chile.html	02-Jul-07
Japan - Brunei Darussalam *	18-Jun-07	http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/brunei/epa0706/index.html	02-Jul-07
EFTA - Egypt *	27-Jan-07	http://secretariat.efta.int/Web/ExternalRelations/PartnerCountries/EG	11-Apr-07
Under Negotiation			
Canada - Jordan	20-Feb-08		30-Jun-08
Australia - Malaysia	19-May-05	http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/malaysia/fta/index.html	25-Feb-08
Australia - GCC	30-Jul-07	http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/fta/gcc/index.html	22-Jan-08
Australia - China	23-May-05	http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/china/fta/index.html	10-Dec-07
European Communities - India	28-Jun-07	http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/countries/india/index_en.htm http://commerce.nic.in EU-India Joint Statement	25-Sep-07
Canada - EFTA	07-Jun-07		23-Aug-07
Canada - CARICOM	19-Jul-07		23-Aug-07
Canada - Dominican Republic	07-Jun-07		23-Aug-07
Canada - Colombia - Peru	07-Jun-07		23-Aug-07
Canada - El Salvador - Guatemala - Honduras - Nicaragua	21-Nov-01		23-Aug-07
Canada - Singapore	21-Oct-01		23-Aug-07
Rep. of Korea - Mexico	07-Feb-06		10-Jul-07
Rep. of Korea - India	07-Feb-06		10-Jul-07
Rep. of Korea - European Communities	06-May-07	http://www.fta.go.kr/user/fta_korea/info.asp?country_idx=21 http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/countries/korea/index_en.htm	10-Jul-07
Rep. of Korea - Canada	15-Jul-05		10-Jul-07
Rep. of Korea - ASEAN	30-Nov-04		10-Jul-07
Japan - Vietnam	01-Jan-07		02-Jul-07
Japan - Rep. of Korea	01-Dec-03		02-Jul-07
Japan - Indonesia *	01-Jul-05		02-Jul-07
Japan - India	01-Jan-07		02-Jul-07
Japan - GCC	01-Sep-06		02-Jul-07
Japan - Australia	01-Apr-07		02-Jul-07
Japan - ASEAN	01-Apr-05		02-Jul-07
EFTA - Colombia	04-Jun-07		14-Jun-07
EFTA - Peru	04-Jun-07		06-Jun-07
Japan - Switzerland	14-May-07		08-Jun-07

* These RTAs have been subsequently notified.