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## **1 ARTICLE 18 OF THE AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE**

### **1.1 Text of Article 18**

#### ***Article 18***

##### *Review of the Implementation of Commitments*

1. Progress in the implementation of commitments negotiated under the Uruguay Round reform programme shall be reviewed by the Committee on Agriculture.
2. The review process shall be undertaken on the basis of notifications submitted by Members in relation to such matters and at such intervals as shall be determined, as well as on the basis of such documentation as the Secretariat may be requested to prepare in order to facilitate the review process.
3. In addition to the notifications to be submitted under paragraph 2, any new domestic support measure, or modification of an existing measure, for which exemption from reduction is claimed shall be notified promptly. This notification shall contain details of the new or modified measure and its conformity with the agreed criteria as set out either in Article 6 or in Annex 2.
4. In the review process Members shall give due consideration to the influence of excessive rates of inflation on the ability of any Member to abide by its domestic support commitments.
5. Members agree to consult annually in the Committee on Agriculture with respect to their participation in the normal growth of world trade in agricultural products within the framework of the commitments on export subsidies under this Agreement.
6. The review process shall provide an opportunity for Members to raise any matter relevant to the implementation of commitments under the reform programme as set out in this Agreement.
7. Any Member may bring to the attention of the Committee on Agriculture any measure which it considers ought to have been notified by another Member.

## 1.2 Article 18.2

### 1.2.1 Review procedures

1. At its first meeting on 27-28 March 1995, the Committee on Agriculture adopted the Organization of Work and Working Procedures.<sup>1</sup> The Committee decided, *inter alia*, that:

"The Committee shall meet at regular intervals to review progress in the implementation of the Uruguay Round reform programme under Article 18:1 and 2 of the Agreement (the 'review process') and generally to carry out such other tasks as are provided for in the Agreement or which may be required to be dealt with."<sup>2</sup>

### 1.2.2 Notification and transparency

#### 1.2.2.1 General

2. At its meeting on 8 June 1995, the Committee on Agriculture adopted a document setting out the requirements and formats for notifications under Article 18.2 of the Agreement on Agriculture and other relevant provisions thereof.<sup>3</sup> These requirements cover five areas: market access<sup>4</sup>, domestic support<sup>5</sup>, export subsidies<sup>6</sup>, export prohibitions and restrictions<sup>7</sup>, and the follow-up to the Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries.<sup>8</sup> In 1995, the Committee also adopted a list of "significant exporters" for the purposes of the Table ES:2 notification requirement. Those Members with no export subsidy reduction commitments but having "significant exporter" status are required to notify annually their total export volumes in respect of the products identified on the list.<sup>9</sup> In November 2022, the Committee on Agriculture agreed that Members, who did not use agricultural export subsidies, may fulfil their outstanding Table ES:1 export subsidy notification obligations by making an oral announcement to this effect in the Committee, in addition to the existing notification submission channel.<sup>10</sup>

3. Since 2009, the Secretariat has issued a document, updated before every regular Committee meeting, showing the status of Members' compliance with notification obligations, circulated as an unrestricted document.<sup>11</sup>

#### 1.2.2.2 Information systems

4. In 2011, in response to Members' requests for improved access to notification-related information, the Secretariat launched the development of an Agriculture Information Management System (Ag-IMS), to allow users to search for and analyse: (i) notifications submitted by Members in line with Committee procedures and formats, (ii) agriculture-related notified information, and (iii) questions raised and responses provided in the context of the Review Process carried out by the Committee on Agriculture.

5. Several database tools support the Committee's monitoring and transparency functions. Since 2012, the Ag-IMS platform has facilitated Member submission of questions and responses in the context of the Committee's monitoring of implementation of commitments. In addition to the Ag-IMS, a new on-line system for agriculture notifications has been developed and launched in

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<sup>1</sup> [G/AG/R/1](#), para. 4. The text of the adopted document can be found in [G/AG/1](#).

<sup>2</sup> [G/AG/1](#), para. 2.

<sup>3</sup> [G/AG/R/2](#), para. 2. The text of the adopted document can be found in [G/AG/2](#).

<sup>4</sup> [G/AG/2](#), pp. 2-11.

<sup>5</sup> [G/AG/2](#), pp. 12-23.

<sup>6</sup> [G/AG/2](#), pp. 24-30.

<sup>7</sup> [G/AG/2](#), pp. 31-32.

<sup>8</sup> [G/AG/2](#), pp. 33-34.

<sup>9</sup> [G/AG/2/Add.1](#). Some Members, in their ES:2 notifications, include additional transparency elements on a voluntary basis based on the Report by the Chairperson contained in [G/AG/W/123](#). [G/AG/R/74](#), section 2.3, refers to this Report and notes that "Members offered to consider positively the recommendations to start implementing on a voluntary basis the progress already achieved towards enhanced transparency of Table ES:2 notifications". See [G/AG/R/74](#), paras. 2.6-2.7.

<sup>10</sup> Paragraph 2.17 of [G/AG/R/104](#).

<sup>11</sup> [G/AG/GEN/86](#) and [revisions](#).

October 2019 for use by all Members. The data on questions and responses as well as notified information provided in both of these systems is publicly available.<sup>12</sup> In response to discussions in the Committee and specific suggestions<sup>13</sup> by Members, a number of improvements have also been introduced to the existing processes and the data systems.<sup>14</sup>

### **1.2.2.3 Developing country Members**

6. The General Council's Decision on Implementation-Related Issues and Concerns states, *inter alia*:

"Members shall ensure that their tariff rate quotas regimes (TRQs) are administered in a transparent, equitable and non-discriminatory manner. In the context, they shall ensure that the notifications they provide to the Committee on Agriculture contain all the relevant information including details on guidelines and procedures on the allotment of TRQs. Members administering TRQs shall submit addenda to their notifications to the Committee on Agriculture (Table MA:1) by the time of the second regular meeting of the Committee in 2001."<sup>15</sup>

7. The understanding was that this decision should not place undue new burdens on developing country Members.<sup>16</sup>

8. The implementation of this General Council Decision has been subject to review by the Committee on Agriculture<sup>17</sup> in accordance with the Doha Ministerial Decision on implementation-related issues and concerns.<sup>18</sup>

### **1.3 Article 18.5: Annual consultations on Members' participation in the normal growth of world agricultural trade**

9. According to the Committee's Organization of Work and Working Procedures<sup>19</sup>, these consultations are to be undertaken at the November meetings of the Committee.<sup>20</sup> In practice, these annual consultations have been based on annually updated statistical background notes provided by the Secretariat.<sup>21</sup>

### **1.4 Article 18.6**

10. With respect to the review process envisaged under Article 18.6, the Organization of Work and Working Procedures of the Committee states, *inter alia*:

"A Member raising a matter relevant to the implementation commitments under Article 18:6, may request the Member to which the matter in question relates, through the Chairperson of the Committee, to provide in writing specific information, or an explanation of the relevant facts or circumstances, regarding the matter that has been raised. The role of the Chairperson shall be to ensure that there are reasonable grounds for the request and that as far as possible duplication and unduly burdensome requests are avoided. The information or explanation thus requested should normally be provided to the Committee by the Member to which the request is addressed within 30 days."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [AGIMS.wto.org](http://AGIMS.wto.org).

<sup>13</sup> [G/AG/W/167](#) and [G/AG/W/167/Corr.1](#).

<sup>14</sup> [G/AG/R/93](#), para. 2.41; [G/AG/GEN/206](#); and [G/AG/37](#).

<sup>15</sup> [WT/L/384](#), para. 1.1.

<sup>16</sup> [WT/GC/M/62](#), para. 14.

<sup>17</sup> [G/AG/11](#).

<sup>18</sup> [WT/MIN\(01\)/17](#), para. 2.4.

<sup>19</sup> With respect to the adoption of the document, see para. 172 of this Chapter.

<sup>20</sup> [G/AG/1](#), para. 17.

<sup>21</sup> [G/AG/W/32](#) and [revisions](#).

<sup>22</sup> [G/AG/1](#), para. 12.

### **1.5 Article 18.7: Counter notifications**

11. The Committee's Organization of Work and Working Procedures states, *inter alia*, that "counter notifications, shall be considered by the Committee at the earliest opportunity."<sup>23</sup> Members' counter-notifications<sup>24</sup> submitted under Article 18.7 have been considered accordingly by the Committee on Agriculture.

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Current as of: June 2024

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<sup>23</sup> [G/AG/1](#), para. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Circulated in the [G/AG/W/](#) series.