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Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda

Regulatory cooperation: Sectoral projects

Progress report on the Sectoral Initiative on Telecom

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

The Sectoral Initiative on Telecom works to create a more open trading environment on the market for telecommunication products. The Working Party approved Common Regulatory Objectives for this sector in 2004. Although there has been limited interest in using these in national legislation or as a basis for mutual recognition agreements, they may nevertheless be a relevant reference in current negotiations under way in the Negotiating Group on Non-agricultural Market Access (NAMA) and in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (see <http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/worksem/wtsa-08/res76/index.html>). The Common Regulatory Objectives could be used to provide practical examples of good regulatory practice in the information and communication technologies sector.

This document is for discussion and information.

* At its eighteenth session, the Working Party asked the secretariat to provide annual updates on the work of all the sectoral initiatives (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2008/18, para.63). Accordingly, this report contains concise information on the status of initiative, and describes the main activities that have been completed or are under way.

I. Project objective and key deliverables

1. The objective of the Sectoral Initiative on Telecom is to create greater market access for information and communication technology (ICT) products. Common regulatory objectives (CROs) for ICT products constitute agreements among interested countries on regulatory convergence in support of legitimate requirements (see TRADE/WP.6/2003/16/Add.2).

2. Common regulatory objectives were drawn up in 2003 for equipment such as:

- personal computers (PCs)
- PC peripherals
- legacy Public Switched Telephone Network Terminals
- Bluetooth
- Wireless Local Area Network
- Global Standard for Mobile Telecommunications
- International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT-2000).

[<http://www.unece.org/trade/wp6/SectoralInitiatives/Telecom/CROs.htm>]

II. Current status of project

3. Recent developments in the Non-agricultural Products Market Access (NAMA) Group include several negotiating papers, that were presented and discussed in the 2010 Progress report on the Sectoral Initiative on Telecom (see: ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2010/10).

III. Progress in 2011 and deliverables for the annual session

4. In 2011, the informal group held one meeting in Stockholm, as part of the Annual Planning Meeting of UNECE WP.6 Activities.

IV. Responsibility for the continuation of the work

5. Mr. Per Döfnäs is responsible for the continuation of this project.

VI. Role of the secretariat

6. The Sectoral Initiative recommends that the secretariat should assist it in (a) initiating a discussion about the CROs with the main producers and Governments of East Asian countries (e.g. China, Japan and the Republic of Korea) and (b) following up on the exchange of correspondence referred to above.
