

SEMINAR REPORT

WTO/TBT Agreement and Standards Matters for Caribbean Countries

19–21 February 2002
Castries, Saint Lucia

IAN DUNMILL, BIML

The Seminar on the WTO/TBT Agreement and Standards Matters for Caribbean Countries took place as part of the WTO's technical assistance activities linked to the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement. It was the result of requests from the secretariats of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

Forty-six participants took part, representing Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Seven people were also present from CARICOM and the OECS.

The Seminar was opened by the Minister of Commerce, Tourism, Investment and Consumer Affairs of Saint Lucia. Three officials from the Trade and Environment and Technical Cooperation Divisions of the WTO, together with experts from ISO, the IEC and the OIML gave presentations on the WTO TBT Agreement and on international standards and legal metrology matters.

The program for the Seminar was as follows:

First day

- Introduction to the WTO
- Introduction to the TBT Agreement - its basic principles
- International Standards and their role in promoting trade
- TBT Agreement and international standards
- Participation of developing countries in international standardization

Second day

- Q&A as well as experience-sharing among participating countries on the use of and participation in the preparation of international standards
- Transparency provisions of the TBT Agreement
- Standards information and its role in economic development
- Q&A and experience-sharing among participating countries concerning the TBT transparency provisions and standards information
- International guides for conformity assessment
- Conformity assessment and the TBT Agreement

Third day

- Regional and international systems for conformity assessment
- Q&A and experience-sharing among participating countries on international guides for conformity assessment as well as regional and international systems for conformity assessment
- Statements on the implementation and administration of the Agreement as well as experience-sharing among participating countries in the implementation of the TBT Agreement
- The TBT Agreement - consultation and dispute settlement
- Benefiting from the TBT Agreement
- The TBT-related Technical Cooperation Program - Identification and prioritization of technical assistance needs by participating countries
- Q&A on TBT technical assistance issues
- Possible solutions at the national, regional and international levels