



Sixteenth session  
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Provisional agenda item 10(c)

**COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM**

**(c) Acronym of the World Tourism Organization**

**Note by the Secretary-General**

In the following document, the Secretary-General informs the Members of the measures taken with a view to using a reference to the United Nations in the acronym of the Organization, and transmits to them decision 12(LXXV) adopted by the Council at its seventy-fifth session.

## COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

### **(d) Acronym of the World Tourism Organization**

1. At the seventy-third session of the Council, the Secretary-General presented a report on the matter of the confusion of acronyms, in English and Russian, with the World Trade Organization, from which the identification of our Institution suffers.
2. It should be recalled that it was during the last negotiating session of the Uruguay Round that the conversion of the GATT was agreed, after the United States of America, which had been reluctant for a long time, finally came round. And it was at the proposal of the U.S. delegation that the name "*World Trade Organization*"--and therefore the acronym "*WTO*"--was adopted, without the Director-General and Legal Adviser of GATT being able to intervene. Many other names giving different acronyms had been suggested in order to avoid this confusion, but unfortunately they were not taken into consideration.
3. Diverse suggestions have been put forward in order to remedy this drawback, including attaching the French or Spanish acronym to the English acronym thus distinguishing between "*WTO/OMC*" and "*WTO/OMT*". Another suggested approach, one that is used in practice by the United Nations Secretariat, is to write "*WTO (Trade)*" and "*WTO (Tourism)*". These solutions do not seem to fully address the problem at hand, since it would be difficult to expect the World Trade Organization to refer to itself using either of the above methods. It is equally unlikely to expect the press, which is now extremely familiar with the acronym "*WTO*" as referring to the World Trade Organization, to change their practice.
4. The transformation of the World Tourism Organization into a specialized agency, insofar as it strengthens our relationship to the United Nations system, allows us to consider resolving the issue by referring to ourselves using the acronym "*UNWTO*". It should be pointed out that the World Trade Organization also belongs to the United Nations system in a broad sense, but only has the status of a "related agency", which was the same status held by the World Tourism Organization prior to its own transformation.
5. Out of courtesy, the Secretary-General felt that, before proceeding with any other initiative, the WTO/OMC should be approached in order to learn its opinion regarding the adoption of the acronym "*UNWTO*". The WTO/OMC has informed us that it would be very grateful if we could carry out this change in our acronym and thus free both organizations from the drawbacks resulting from the current confusion in their names.

6. The Members of the Council shared the opinion of the Secretary-General that it was advisable to avoid confusion of the WTO's acronym with that of the World Trade Organization in English and Russian, and underlined that any decision regarding this matter should be taken in the context of the Organization's new status as a specialized agency of the United Nations. They expressed the wish that the reference to the United Nations should not be the privilege of a single language but that it should appear, in one way or another, in all the languages used by the Organization.

7. On 14 December 2004, the Secretary-General requested the authorization of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to use a reference to the United Nations in our acronym. On 27 January 2005, Mr. Kofi Annan sent a communication to the Secretary-General indicating his consent to adding the United Nations' initials to our acronym.

8. Thus, the door is now open to make use of a reference to the United Nations to the extent necessary according to the language used.

9. The Assembly is thus called to take a definitive decision in this matter, and to adopt the acronyms "UNWTO" in English and "ЮНВТО" in Russian, as the Council entrusted it to do at its last session held in Nessebar, Bulgaria, in June 2005. The current acronym in Spanish and French, "OMT", can be maintained in practice. Nevertheless, as a general rule, the reference to the United Nations should appear in the Institution's different modes of expression (letterhead, website, etc.), regardless of the language used.

