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DECLASSIFICATION

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Subject: Report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 27 March 2002

Delegations will find attached the declassified version of the above document.

The text of this document is identical to the previous version.

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TRANSMISSION OF TEXT

from : Secretariat

Subject : Report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 27 March 2002

Please find annexed the report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 27 March 2002.

1. ASEM

(a) AETTC

The Presidency informed the Group on its intentions for the handling of this issue at the SOM in Lanzarote. Delegations agreed with the suggested approach, namely to sound out the Asian partners' intentions for future contributions to the AETTC before continuing the discussion on a coherent EU position at the next COASI meeting.

(b) ASEM TRUST FUND

The Commission briefed the Group on the results of the meeting of ASEM Trust Fund Workshop in Bangkok (12.03.2002). Delegations noted the Chairman's conclusions in DS 56/02 and expressed broad support for the Commission's suggested approach for the further handling on phase II of the Trust Fund.

(c) ECONOMIC COORDINATORS MEETING

The Commission will circulate a preparatory note on the key issues to be discussed at the next meeting of economic co-ordinators. Delegations are invited to transmit their possible comments in writing to the Presidency, the Commission and the Secretariat.

2/3. AUSTRALIA / NEW ZEALAND

The Commission briefed the Group on the current, healthy relations with Australia and New Zealand, including in the commercial sphere. It briefed on the wine negotiations with Australia, where, unfortunately, it did not expect to make much progress until after the publication of the Commission's forthcoming Regulation on traditional expressions. No such negotiations had begun with New Zealand. The Commission also noted that EC-Australia Ministerial consultations would be held on 18 April. The Australia deputy PM, Foreign Minister and Minister for Immigration and Indigenous People would all attend. Bilateral relations, agriculture, commercial relations (including the WTO) and immigration issues would all be included on the agenda. The Group encouraged the Commission to provide the agenda for and a report of this meeting. In the absence of formal co-

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operation agreements with the two countries it was useful for the Group to be kept informed of contacts with the Commission.

4. MONGOLIA

The Commission informed the Group on the preparation of the forthcoming EC-Mongolia sub-committee on trade and investment (Ulaan Bator, 8/9.05.2002). The Group noted the draft agenda for the meeting (DS 57/02).

5. INDIA

The Commission informed the Group on the preparation of the forthcoming EC-India sub-committee on trade and investment. The Group noted the draft agenda for the meeting (DS 58/02) and encouraged the Commission to seek further progress in the various areas of concern raised by delegations, including wines and spirits, technical obstacles to trade, textiles, marbles, etc. The Group will come back to these issues in June in the context of the preparation of the next EC-India Joint Committee meeting in July.

6. NEPAL

The Commission briefed the Group on the results of the last Joint Committee meeting, and on the outcome of discussion on EC assistance, human rights, the political evolution in the country, trade issues, and the problems of Bhutanese refugees. The minutes of the meeting will be circulated once they have been agreed with the Nepalese side.

7. CAMBODIA

The Group noted the Commission's proposal for a draft agenda for the forthcoming EC-Cambodia Joint Committee meeting and agreed to come back in greater detail to this issue at one of its next meetings.

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8. A.O.B.

- **Afghanistan**

The Group noted the operational conclusions agreed by the PSC on 26 March (c.f. Coreu SEC 0699/02), which will be submitted as a "I" point to Coreper for approval. The COASI Working Group on 11 April will carry the discussion forward and examine, i.a., possible benchmarks for conditionality. The Presidency will circulate draft Council Conclusions by Coreu, which will be examined by PSC and Coreper on 9 and 10 April respectively. The Secretariat will circulate the Matrix for Member States' and EC reconstruction projects, which will be discussed initially at the next COASI Working Group.

- **Vietnam / Cambodia : repatriation of montagnards**

The Group noted a draft HRW report and a US demarche on this issue.

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