



HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

NC0351E1

-
27th Session
-

O. Eng.

Brussels, .

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

(Item II.5 on Agenda)

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Secretariat has continued its close co-operation with other international organisations with a view to achieving the wider and more uniform application of the Harmonized System. Important activities which have occurred between the Committee's 26th and 27th Sessions are summarized below.

II. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

2. The fifth ICC/WCO pre-Harmonized System Committee meeting was held at the WCO on 15 February 2001. The meeting was again a very productive one, enabling the Secretariat to receive timely and pertinent information for use in the preparation of working documents for HSC/27. The Secretariat staff also received a very informative demonstration of the Palm V (see Agenda Item VIII.14).
3. The ICC, at the request of the HSC at its 26th Session, has also arranged demonstrations for both the EC and HSC/27 on the following products : two demos for the "Media Composer 1000" 1996 version (floppy drive-downloaded into memory) and current unit (CD drive-working from CD), DVDs, Palm V, flash Electronic storage cards and roamabouts (EC only). The demos will be provided to delegates on Tuesday, 8 May 2001.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

4. On 27 February 2001, Mr. A. L. Ribeiro attended the 25th meeting of the Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products at WTO Headquarters in Geneva as an observer.
5. Mr. Ribeiro informed the WTO Committee that the Secretariat had studied WTO Doc. G/IT/14/Rev.1 on classification divergencies very carefully. He explained the functioning and the decision making process of the HSC and also indicated that it would be logical for the WTO Committee to turn to the HSC for the examination of certain classification

File No. 2082

divergencies. However, in view of the highly technical nature of these classification questions, he requested that they be submitted to the HSC as soon as possible so that an answer could be given in a timely manner.

6. On a related matter, he noted on page 2 of Doc. G/IT/14/Rev.1 that the Customs experts had proposed that the WTO Committee should make proposals for amendments to the HS Nomenclature. He indicated that such proposals would need to reach the WCO Secretariat as soon as possible as there were only six sessions before June 2004, which was the deadline for Council adoption of the Recommendation for HS 2007 amendments. Therefore, he requested the WTO Committee to contact the WCO with respect to any new proposals for HS 2007 amendments in the near future.
7. Furthermore, Mr. Ribeiro indicated that the Secretariat had sent the WTO information concerning the classification of information technology products up to the 25th Session of the HSC and he would be submitting updates from the latest meeting shortly.
8. The Chairperson proposed, as a next step, that the WTO Committee should take a decision with respect to Lists I, II and III in Doc. G/IT/W/6 at the next meeting of the WTO Committee scheduled for 10 April 2001, keeping in mind the deadline of the WCO, whose next meeting was scheduled for May 2001.
9. On 20 and 21 March 2001, in response to an invitation of the World Trade Organization (Market Access Division), Mr. I.H.J. Wind participated in a seminar organized by the WTO at its headquarters (Geneva). The seminar was organized with a view to refreshing and deepening the knowledge of delegates to the Market Access Committee with respect to relevant GATT 1994 provisions.
10. In his presentation, Mr. Wind highlighted the HS background, HS Convention, HSC, HS 2002 amendments and the assignment of code numbers. In responding to a question posed by one of the participants, he explained that decisions taken by the HSC were not binding, but that Members were supposed to implement them.
11. About 100 Member countries and observers participated in this seminar.
12. United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
13. On 14 and 15 December 2000, Mr. Ribeiro attended a meeting of the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics at United Nations Headquarters in New York. In his presentation, Mr. Ribeiro highlighted necessary amendments to Chapter 7, concerning "Commodity Classification", of the draft Compilers Manual.
14. At this meeting, the urgent need for correlation tables between the HS 1996 and 2002 versions was stressed. UNSD officers also requested the WCO to publish a list with all headings and subheadings deleted from the HS 2002 version.
15. On 27 March 2001, Mr. S. Koças attended a meeting of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics held in Beirut, Lebanon. The Task Force was informed of the issuance of the correlation tables between HS 1996 and HS 2002, the adoption of the amendments to the HS Explanatory Notes in line with the HS 2002 and developments with regard to the Revised Kyoto Convention. The UNSD Representative indicated that his organization was about to finalize the HS 2002/SITC.Rev.3 correlation. As soon as the work was finished, a draft would be sent to the WCO for comment.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

16. On 2 November 2000, Mr. Koças attended the 7th Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, held in Geneva, Switzerland. Mr. Koças briefed the Negotiating Committee on the separate identification or non-identification of the goods concerned in the present HS, on the procedure for amendments to the Nomenclature for the possible separate identification of those products in the future and on the possibility of producing an HS-related WCO Recommendation for the insertion of additional subheadings in national nomenclatures as an interim measure. The Secretariat is expecting the Interim Secretariat for the Rotterdam Convention to approach the WCO soon with proposals for amendments to the HS and for a new Recommendation.

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

17. On 13 November 2000, the Secretariat received a letter from the OPCW (International Co-operation and Assistance Division) requesting the Secretariat to confirm the HS codes incorporated in its Handbook on Chemicals, May 2000. This Handbook has been compiled by conducting a search of the Chemical-Abstracts Service registry for all chemicals meeting the criteria of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) Schedules, and cross-searching the resulting data file against major chemical product registries, as well as safety data bases. The assumption was that by using this methodology, the majority of chemicals that met the criteria of the CWC and that were actually in use would be identified, while scheduled chemicals of the CWC that had no practical application would largely be left out.
18. Taking note of the technical nature of this request, the Secretariat placed this issue on the agenda of the 16th Session of the Scientific Sub-Committee to examine the classification of 929 chemicals reflected in the OPCW Handbook, May 2000 (Doc. NS0021E1). The observations of the Sub-Committee, in this regard, are set out at Annexes A/6 and C/4 to Doc. NS0034E2 (see Agenda Item V).
19. On 24 January 2001, the Secretariat received a letter from the OPCW (Declaration Branch), reiterating its desire for enhanced co-operation. A copy of the document entitled Declaration of Imports and Exports of Schedule 2/3 Chemicals dated 12 January 2001 was enclosed, which reflected some Customs related difficulties in the implementation of the CWC.
20. In this connection, the OPCW requested the Secretariat to send a representative to attend their Industry Cluster meeting during the week of 19-23 March 2001 as an observer. Since the 23rd Session of the Review Sub-Committee was scheduled for that week, the Secretariat was unable to send an officer as an observer but assured OPCW of its fullest co-operation in the implementation of the CWC.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

21. On 20 November 2000, Mr. Wind attended the 2nd OECD Trade Statistics Meeting in Paris. He informed the participants about the introduction of the HS 2002 amendments, emphasizing the assignment and re-use of code numbers in areas where the HS structure has been changed.

22. Responding to the request of number of participants to receive the complete correlation tables in electronic format, Mr. Wind informed the group that it would be made available via the WCO Web site. One of the participants suggested disseminating the information through the International Task Force on Merchandise Trade EDG, to avoid numerous requests. The Secretariat followed up on these.

III. CONCLUSION

23. The Committee is invited to take note of these developments.
-