



HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

-
27th Session
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NC0359E1

O. Eng.

Brussels, 23 April 2001.

UN/SPSC COMMODITY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

(Item III.4 on Agenda)

Reference documents :

NC0328E1 (HSC/26)
NC0340E2, Annex C/5 (HSC/26 – Report)

I. BACKGROUND

1. At its 26th Session (November 2000), the Committee discussed the UN/SPSC classification system and its impact on the Harmonized System. Since the working document had only been published shortly before the meeting, not all delegates were in a position to provide the requested feedback. The Committee agreed to continue discussions at its next session, administrations being invited to inform the Secretariat of any problem they might have encountered with respect to the introduction of the afore-mentioned classification system.

II. SECRETARIAT COMMENTS

2. During the intersession, the Secretariat sent a letter to all administrations, inviting them to submit their comments in respect of any problem encountered in the use of the UN/SPSC classification system (letter of 10 January 2001, reference No. 01/NL0011-Wi/FI). We have received responses from the Customs Administrations of the Russian Federation, Cyprus, Peru and Mexico, all of which share the concerns expressed by the Secretariat in paragraph 9 of Doc. NC0328E1. The Customs Administration of Mexico indicates also that the WCO should express its strong disapproval to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).
3. So far, the Secretariat has not had the courtesy of a response from the UNDP to our enquiries of March 1999 and May and October 2000.
4. With respect to the possible use of the UN/SPSC classification system, the Secretariat has gathered some information from the Internet (www.eccma.org/unspsc), showing that about 15 companies are apparently using it.

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5. Given the fact that no Customs administration has reported difficulties encountered so far, the Secretariat wonders what action should be taken, if any. As indicated in paragraph 2 above, the Mexican Customs Administration has suggested sending a strong letter of disapproval to the United Nations Development Program. Given the fact that none of the letters sent by the Secretariat has been answered by that UN agency, the Secretariat has some doubts whether such action would have any effect. Nonetheless, it is prepared to follow up that suggestion, if the Committee instructs the Secretariat to do so. Such action could be taken in co-operation with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

III. CONCLUSION

6. The Committee is invited to indicate whether the Secretariat should take stronger action, if any, vis-à-vis the UNDP with regard to the promulgation of the UN/SPSC commodity classification system, taking into account the comments of the Secretariat set out in paragraphs 2 to 5 above.
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