



WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES DOUANES

Established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council
Créée en 1952 sous le nom de Conseil de coopération douanière

HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

NC0667E1

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31st Session

O. Eng.

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Brussels, 15 April 2003.

USE OF WORKING LANGUAGES FOR HS MATTERS

(Item III.1 on Agenda)

Reference documents :

NC0361E1 (HSC/27)
NC0430E2 (HSC/27 – Report)

NC0600E1 (HSC/30)
NC0655E2, Annex C (HSC/30 – Report)

I. BACKGROUND

1. At its 30th Session (November 2002), the Director informed the Committee that the Inter-American Development Bank had approved a project to support the use of Spanish as a working language in the Harmonized System Committee (in the amount of €140.000), and that they were in the process of identifying consultants and developing an action plan for the execution of the project in close collaboration with the Secretariat for the Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal.
2. As to the Spanish version of the HS 2002 Explanatory Notes, the Director informed the Committee that the Mexican Customs Administration had recently notified the Secretariat that this version had now been approved by the Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal. He let the Committee know that an agreed Spanish version of the HS 2002 Explanatory Notes was available in the meeting room for inspection and asked the Committee to accept this version. The EC Delegate informed the Committee that this version was the official Spanish language version of the European Community.
3. Subsequently, the Committee accepted the agreed Spanish working language version of the HS 2002 Explanatory Notes. The Delegate of Mexico expressed his gratitude to the HS Committee for accepting the Spanish version of the Explanatory Notes. In particular he was grateful to the Spanish Administration for its active contribution during the preparation of these Explanatory Notes. He also thanked the Committee and the Secretariat for supporting the use of Spanish as a working language in the HS Committee, and was therefore looking forward to the active participation of Spanish speaking countries in the future meetings of the Committee.

Files Nos. 2100 and 2144

II. RECENT ACTIVITIES

Spanish

4. As to the further use of Spanish as a working language in the Harmonized System Committee, the Secretariat regrets to inform the Committee that not much progress can be reported since the last session. However, a draft agreement in this respect is being prepared for signature between the WCO and the Secretariat of the "Convention on Mutual Assistance and Co-operation between National Directors of Customs of Latin America, Spain and Portugal".
5. At the time of preparation of this document, the Secretariat has no further information with regard to this matter. Spanish speaking administrations are therefore invited to inform the Committee of the present state of affairs in this regard.

Arabic

6. Following information obtained by the WCO Secretary General at the All Africa Customs Conference (South Africa) in January 2003 concerning possible Arabic interpretation for WCO meetings dealing with the Harmonized System, the Secretariat prepared an estimate for the provision of Arabic interpretation at HS-related meetings. This estimate was sent to the Regional Chairman (Jordan) for information in January 2003.
7. At the time of preparation of this document, the Secretariat has no further information with regard to this issue. Arabic speaking administrations are therefore invited to inform the Committee of the present state of affairs in this regard.

III. CONCLUSION

8. The Committee is invited to take note of the above information relating to the use of the Spanish and Arabic languages for HS matters.
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