



HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

-
25th Session
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NC0170E1

O. Eng.

Brussels, 17 March 2000.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

(Item II.6 on Agenda)

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Secretariat 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 occurred between the Committee's 24th and 25th Sessions are summarized below.

II. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

2. The Fourth ICC/WCO pre-Harmonized System Committee meeting was held at the WCO on 4 February 2000. The meeting continued the mutually beneficial exchange of information between the private sector and the Secretariat, thereby assisting the Secretariat in its preparation of documents for the Committees. Demonstrations of specific equipment were provided to the Secretariat's staff. Similar demonstrations of game controllers and the QuickCam/Web cameras will be provided to delegates on Tuesday, 21 March 2000.

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

3. The Secretariat communicated with the International Trade Statistics Methodology and Analysis Section with regard to the "International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual" and has assured UNSD of its co-operation with regard to this very significant and useful project which should lead to more uniform application of the Harmonized System.

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4. The Director of Tariff and Trade Affairs attended the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications of the United Nations from 15 to 17 November 1999 in New York. The Expert Group meets once a year to set the work programme for the UNSD where work is heavily weighted towards economic classifications such as the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) and the Harmonized System. This was the first time that the WCO had been represented in the Expert Group. Mr. Kappler was able to update the Group on the amendment of the Harmonized System for 2002 and the plans for the next HS review cycle which will culminate in 2007. The Expert Group and the UN's Statistical Commission have accepted that amendments to the other trade statistical classifications should be driven by the schedule of amendments to the Harmonized System. Thus, for example, it was agreed that the ISIC and CPC (Central Product Classification) should be updated in 2002 and 2007 in co-ordination with the Harmonized System schedule. Mr. Kappler also encouraged input into the amendment of the HS by members of the international statistical community and suggested that the UNSD play a stronger role in the future meetings of the HS Review Sub-Committee with a view to representing the needs of statisticians.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

5. The Secretariat communicated with the Interim Secretariat for the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade which was adopted in September 1998 and is expected to come into force in 2001. Article 13 to this Convention provides that "The Conference of the Parties shall encourage the World Customs Organization to assign specific Customs codes to the individual chemicals or groups of chemicals listed in Annex III, as appropriate." At present there are 27 entries in Annex III. In this regard, the Secretariat extended its co-operation in assigning specific HS codes to the individual chemicals or groups of chemicals listed in Annex III to that Convention with a view to facilitating the application of the Rotterdam Convention.
6. The Secretariat communicated with UNEP Ozone Secretariat and sent them a copy of the Recommendation concerning ozone layer depleting substances, which was adopted by the Council in June 1999. The Secretariat also recalled the decision of the Harmonized System Committee at its 23rd Session with regard to the question concerning mixtures containing ozone layer depleting substances which it was agreed would be re-examined at a later stage on the basis of further information to be submitted by the UNEP.

International Dairy Federation (IDF)

7. The Director attended an IDF Symposium on "Overcoming Barriers to World Trade in Food and Dairy Products" held in Frankfurt from 7 to 8 November 1999 and as a guest speaker made a presentation on "Tariff systems and standards".

III. CONCLUSION

8. The Committee is invited to take note of these developments.
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