



HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

-
26th Session
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NC0263E1

O. Eng.

Brussels, 6 November 2000.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

(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 occurred between the Committee's 25th and 26th Sessions are summarized below.

II. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

2. In May 2000, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) assisted in organizing a meeting between Contracting Parties, the Secretariat, the ICC and business associations from Europe, Japan and North America for the purpose of discussing the 3rd Review Cycle in relation to the high technology area. In May and in July 2000, the ICC arranged a meeting between the Secretariat and private sector companies for the purpose of providing technical information to the Secretariat to facilitate the preparation of working documents by the Secretariat. The ICC will arrange demonstrations of the "Media Composer 1000" and the "Color QuickCam" for the benefit of HSC/26 delegates; those demonstrations will take place on 14 November 2000.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

3. On 14 June 2000, Mr. A.L. Ribeiro attended the 22nd meeting of the Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products, at WTO headquarters in Geneva, as an observer. He also attended the 23rd meeting of the same Committee on 30 October 2000.

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4. Among the items discussed, one related to divergencies in classifying information technology products. The WTO Secretariat had compiled information on various classification issues concerning information technology products and had provided them to the WTO Committee.
5. Mr. Ribeiro also attended the Committee on Market Access held at WTO headquarters on 27 June 2000. He made a presentation with regard to the 2002 amendments.
6. The Director of Tariff and Trade Affairs visited the WTO on 17 July 2000 and discussed various matters related to the Harmonized System, including the number of administrations still operating under GATT waivers with regard to HS/96, classification divergencies related to the Information Technology Agreement and HS 2002 and its impact on WTO.
7. WTO is considering expedited procedures for implementing the HS 2002 amendments with regard to their schedules of tariff concessions. They are urgently awaiting the completion of the Correlation Tables.
8. A request was received to organise an orientation programme on HS 2002 for the Geneva representatives to the WTO. The idea would be to brief them on the implications of the HS amendments on national administrations, the schedule for implementation of the amendments and the implications of the amendments on WTO schedules of tariff concessions. The timing of this programme would coincide with the publication of HS Correlation Tables and amended Explanatory Notes at the end of this year.

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

9. The Secretariat extended its co-operation to the International Trade Statistics Methodology and Analysis Section with regard to the development of the "International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual", a very significant and useful project which should lead to more uniform application of the Harmonized System.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

10. The Secretariat extended its co-operation to 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. The Secretariat provided the Interim Secretariat with a list of appropriate HS code numbers for the chemicals listed in Annex III to the Rotterdam Convention along with its observations.
11. The Secretariat communicated with the CITES Secretariat in connection with the updating of Annex I to the Explanatory Notes regarding the "Table establishing an interconnection between the HS and CITES", on the basis of the HS 2002 amendments.

International Trade Centre (ITC/WTO)

12. The Secretariat communicated with the ITC in connection with the Recommendation concerning the insertion in national statistical nomenclatures of subheadings to facilitate the collection and comparison of trade data on hand-made products and kept them informed of the co-operation extended by the WCO.

III. CONCLUSION

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