



HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

-
27th Session
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NC0360E1

O. Eng.

Brussels, 8 March 2001.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE 2002 VERSION OF THE HARMONIZED SYSTEM

(Item III.5 on Agenda)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this document is twofold – first to inform administrations about the progress the Secretariat has made with regard to the implementation of the 2002 version of the HS and, second, to ask administrations to report on progress in their countries with regard to this question.
2. In this connection, the Secretariat would remind administrations that acceptance of past HS amendments was a difficult process. Only 45% of Members were able to implement the first set of HS amendments in January 1992, while the percentage for the second set in January 1996 crept up to 58%.
3. The Secretariat believes it important to take stock of the situation at this time with a view to improving on the percentage of countries able to implement the 2002 version of the HS on the 1st of January 2002.

II. SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES

4. The Secretariat has been working hard to support the implementation of the 2002 version of the Harmonized System. Since the last session of the Committee, the Secretariat has published the correlation tables in hard copy and via the internet, sent the HS 2002 Amendments booklet to the printer, and sent the 2002 version of the HS Nomenclature publication to the printer.
5. We have specifically provided the correlation tables to the WTO and UNSD and have participated in a special workshop at the WTO to explain the implementation of the 2002 version of the HS.

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6. We are on schedule for publishing the 2002 versions of the HS Explanatory Notes, the Laboratory Guide and the Harmonizer by the Summer of this year. The 2002 versions of the Alphabetical Index, the Classification Opinions and the HS Commodity Data Base should be published in the Fall.
7. The Secretariat has organised close to 40 national and regional training programs since June 1999, at which the HS 2002 amendments have been featured prominently.

III. MEMBERS' PROGRESS

8. The bulk of the work of implementing the 2002 version, of course, falls on the Contracting Parties. Each administration will have to amend its tariff and statistical systems, which in many countries involves the legislative process. A great deal of work is involved in translating the amendments into third languages, negotiations with other government agencies to adjust tariff rates, completing the legal process to amend tariff and statistical systems, publishing the amended tariff and statistical publications, revising regulations and databases, training and public information campaigns, etc. A number of administrations are also required to complete the renegotiation of their WTO schedules of tariff concessions under Article XXVIII of the GATT by 1 January 2002.
9. On its technical assistance missions to Member administrations the Secretariat has been uniformly informed that the implementation of the 2002 version of the HS is proceeding on time. Nevertheless, we believe that it is time to take stock of the situation in the Committee. We would therefore request delegates to the 27th Session of the HS Committee to be prepared to give a progress report on HS 2002 implementation in their administrations.
10. To the extent that there are any problems identified during the meeting, the Secretariat can then take measures to assist any administration needing help before the end of this year.

IV. CONCLUSION

11. The Committee is invited to note the progress made by the Secretariat towards the implementation of the 2002 version of the Harmonized System and individual administrations are invited to provide a progress report on the situation in their countries in moving towards the implementation of the HS 2002.
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