



HARMONIZED SYSTEM  
COMMITTEE

-  
28<sup>th</sup> Session  
-

NC0457E1

O. Eng.

Brussels, 2 October 2001.

## APPROVAL OF REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

(Item II.10 on Agenda)

### I. BACKGROUND

1. At past Policy Commission meetings the Secretary General has expressed his desire to discontinue the WCO practice of the reading of committee, sub-committee and working party reports at the end of meetings. Exceptions would be made in the case of committees, such as the Harmonized System Committee, where there were legal requirements to finalise reports at the end of meetings.
2. The reason for the Secretary General's proposal is that the reading of reports at the end of meetings normally involves a loss of one and a half days of meeting time and is thus expensive for both Members and the Secretariat. Such an expense can no longer be justified in these days of budgetary constraints. Alternative reporting procedures should therefore be developed. The Members of the Policy Commission have generally supported the Secretary General with regard to this change in policy.
3. The Secretariat has now been directed by the Secretary General to discontinue reading of Review Sub-Committee reports at the end of the Sub-Committee's meetings, beginning with the Spring 2002 session. The Secretariat has been asked to come up with pragmatic and imaginative solutions to the problem.

### II. REVISED RSC REPORTING PROCEDURE

4. After consulting with the RSC Chairman and Vice-Chairman and a number of Members, the Secretariat has come up with the following new approval procedure for RSC reports :
  - The Secretariat will prepare all draft annexes of the RSC report setting out the approved texts and provide them to delegates by the end of the RSC meeting.

File No. 2883

- The Secretariat will not be able to provide the narrative portions of the draft report by the end of the meeting.
  - Accordingly, the RSC will no longer read and finalise the report of the meeting at the end of the session.
  - The draft report will be completed by the Secretariat during the week after the end of the meeting and circulated – to RSC delegates only – for comment.
  - The comment period will be one week and only written comments will be accepted on the draft report.
  - The draft report and the comments received will then be published as working documents for the immediately following HSC meeting.
  - The draft report will be finalised during the first week of the immediately following HSC meeting by the **RSC delegates present** on the basis of the **written comments only**.
  - The final report will be examined by the whole Committee on the basis of the usual decision document prepared by the Secretariat during the second week of the HS Committee's meeting.
5. We believe that this new procedure will allow us to devote more time in the RSC meetings to substantive work or to hold shorter meetings.
6. At the same time approving the report during the HSC meeting should take less time than now since the discussions will be strictly limited to written comments received before the meeting.

### III. CONCLUSION

7. The Secretariat trusts that the Committee understands the need to take these actions in these times of fiscal austerity. The Secretariat believes that the new procedure will result in substantial savings for Members and the Secretariat, while at the same time streamlining the approval process and continuing to ensure the high quality and accuracy of the reports.
8. The Members of the Review Sub-Committee and the Harmonized System Committee are requested to take note of these new reporting procedures of the Sub-Committee.
-