



HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

-
31st Session
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NC0663E1

O. Eng.

Brussels, 19 March 2003.

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 have occurred between the Committee's 30th and 31st Sessions are summarised below.

II. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

2. The HS Committee and the Review Sub-Committee continue to examine the proposals from UNEP regarding creation of a new Council Recommendation concerning mixtures containing ozone layer depleting substances (ODS), as well as possible amendments to subheading 3824.7 to be introduced from January 2007. The relevant issues are also reflected in the Agenda of this session of the HSC (Items IV.1 and VI.2, respectively).
3. In connection with the co-operation between the WCO Secretariat and the Ozone Secretariat of UNEP, the WCO Secretariat was informed that at the 14th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, held in Rome (from 25 to 29 November 2002), the Parties made the following Decision (XIV/7) related to the monitoring of trade in ODS and preventing illegal trade in ODS :

“To urge each Party that has not already done so to introduce in its national customs classification system the separate sub-divisions for the most commonly traded HCFCs and other ODS, contained in the World Customs Organization recommendation of 25 June 1999 and request that Parties provide a copy to the Secretariat; and to urge all Parties to take due account of any new recommendations by the World Customs Organization once they are agreed.”

File No. 2082

4. The WCO Secretariat appreciates this initiative as a contribution to the improvement of the acceptance of Council Recommendations regarding ODS by Contracting Parties. The full text of Decision XIV/7 will be made available to delegates at the meeting.
5. The WCO Secretariat has also continued its co-operation with the Interim Secretariat for the Rotterdam Convention (UNEP). On the basis of proposals received from the Interim Secretariat and from the EC, the HS Committee at its 30th Session and the Scientific Sub-Committee at its 18th Session started to discuss the possible separate identification in the Harmonized System of the chemical products and their preparations subject to the Rotterdam Convention. This issue is also on the Agenda of this meeting (see Item VIII.11).

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

6. At the invitation of OPCW, a Secretariat officer participated in a "Technical Meeting of National Authorities on Practical Aspects of the Transfers Regime in Terms of the Current Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention", organised by OPCW and the Spanish national authorities, held in Madrid, Spain from 28 to 29 November 2002. 43 participants from all over the world attended the meeting.
7. During this meeting, the Secretariat officer gave a presentation on the use of the Harmonized System and the connection between the Chemical Weapons Convention and WCO, in particular the Harmonized System.
8. The WCO presentation concentrated on the structure of the Harmonized System and the means to arrive at a uniform and consistent application. The participants showed a keen interest in the subject and had a number of questions related to the issues presented, which were discussed and clarified during the presentation.
9. The Secretariat will continue co-operation with and assistance to the OPCW Secretariat, as needed.

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

10. On the basis of world import data for 109 countries provided by UNSD for the years 1997 to 2000 the Secretariat prepared a study regarding the possible deletion of headings/subheadings with a small volume of trade, which was submitted to the Review Sub-Committee for consideration. The Review Sub-Committee started discussion of this issue at its 26th Session and in pursuing the matter. Co-operation with UNSD in this respect will, of course, continue.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

11. At the invitation of FAO, a Secretariat officer participated in a joint FAO/INBAR (International Network for Bamboo and Rattan) Expert Consultation on developing an action programme towards improved bamboo and rattan trade statistics, held in Rome, Italy from 4 to 6 December 2002.

12. During this meeting, the Secretariat officer gave a presentation on the WCO and the Harmonized System. The presentation concentrated on the structure of the Harmonized System and the work of the Harmonized System Committee and its sub-committees and, in particular, the procedure for updating the Harmonized System.
13. The Secretariat expects INBAR, in collaboration with FAO and interested national Customs administrations, to submit a full proposal to improve bamboo and rattan trade statistics to the WCO in due time.

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

14. The ICC continues to co-operate with the Secretariat, enabling it to receive timely and pertinent information for use in the preparation of working documents for the HSC and the Review Sub-Committee. This assistance is particularly noteworthy with regard to information technology products, which is, of course, one of the area of interest with regard to the 3rd HS Review Cycle.

International Union of Railways (UIC)

15. On 5 March 2003, a Secretariat officer attended the annual meeting of the Management Committee of the Harmonised Nomenclature of Merchandise (NHM) of the International Union of Railways (UIC) in Paris, France. He informed the Management Committee of the HS 2002 amendments, the progress on their implementation and the scope of the 3rd HS Review Cycle.

III. CONCLUSION

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