



HARMONIZED SYSTEM  
COMMITTEE

-  
28<sup>th</sup> Session  
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NC0443E1

O. Eng.

Brussels, 4 October 2001.

## 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 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Sessions are summarized below.

### II. AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

#### International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

2. The 6<sup>th</sup> ICC/WCO pre-Harmonized System Committee meeting was held at the WCO on 12 September 2001. The meeting was very useful for the technical staff to further its understanding of the semiconductor manufacturing process. The ICC has, of course, also contributed substantial technical information on numerous agenda items for the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Review Sub-Committee and this session of the HS Committee.

#### World Trade Organization (WTO)

3. On 1 July 2001, the WCO Secretariat received a letter from the Chairman of the WTO Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products. In his letter, WTO provided a list of products for classification by the HSC.
4. The relevant issues are reflected in the Agenda of this session of the HSC (Items VIII 10-17). The Secretariat has requested the WTO to send a representative of the WTO Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products to this session to participate in the discussion of these agenda items.

File No. 2082

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

5. On 28 to 29 June 2001, a Secretariat officer participated in a UNEP workshop on "codes, contraband and co-operation : working with Customs authorities to implement environmental treaties", in Geneva. This workshop was held to fulfil a commitment made by UNEP to the secretariats of trade-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to provide an opportunity for them explore together a cooperative approach to the use of Customs codes to curb illegal trade in commodities of environmental concern.
6. During this workshop, the Secretariat officer gave a general overview of the WCO and explained the HS background, HS Convention, HSC and HS 2002 amendments. Furthermore, he highlighted specific HS amendments and WCO Recommendations concerning certain chemical products and wastes of environmental concern and indicated that the Harmonized System and its related instruments were the most appropriate tool to control and monitor the international movement of goods, thereby complementing the provisions laid down in the multilateral environmental agreements.
7. The workshop acknowledged the many benefits of the Harmonized System and encouraged close working relationships between the UNEP Secretariat, MEAs and the WCO in that respect.
8. The workshop recognized the benefits of a coordinated approach among MEA secretariats, implementing agencies, and the WCO Secretariat in areas such as training, enforcement, exchange of information and experiences, and awareness-raising.
9. A Secretariat officer also participated in the meeting on "Integrated Training Strategy", held on 1 October 2001, at the UNEP DTIE (Division of Technology, Industry and Economics) Energy and Ozon Action Unit, in Paris. The chairperson emphasised the need for harmonization of Customs training under the UNEP Convention Secretariats that has been expressed by a number of countries and endorsed by Governing Council of UNEP and donors. It was evident that, increasingly, Customs officers at the national level were becoming the major actors in assisting national governments in compliance and combating environmental crimes. The major concern was to build the capacity of Customs officers with regard to compliance and the monitoring of MEAs.
10. The Secretariat officer gave a detailed presentation of the training, awareness raising and information exchange programmes that the WCO organises in its 158 Member countries. He explained the main objectives of WCO training and technical assistance programmes, types of training programmes conducted, how they are funded and how the resource persons are used.
11. In this connection the Executive Director of UNEP indicated that he would communicate with the WCO, requesting overarching support for this endeavour.
12. On 18 July 2001, the Executive Secretaries for the Rotterdam Convention, visited the WCO Secretariat to discuss the implementation of Article 13, paragraph 1 of the Rotterdam Convention which reads as follows :

"The Conference of the Parties shall encourage the World Customs Organization to assign specific Harmonized System customs codes to the individual chemicals or groups of chemicals listed in Annex III, as appropriate. Each Party shall require that,

whenever a code has been assigned to such a chemical, the shipping document for the chemical bears the code when exported.”

13. During that meeting, a possible approach was discussed in some depth that would allow for the assignment of specific Harmonized System codes for the chemicals listed in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention. The Secretariat has continued its co-operation in this regard and expects the Interim Secretariat for the Rotterdam Convention to approach the WCO with proposals for amendments to the Harmonized System and for a new Recommendation.

#### Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

14. At the invitation of the OPCW, a Secretariat officer gave a lecture on 8 August 2001 concerning the connection between the Chemical Weapons Convention and WCO, in particular the Harmonized System.
15. The lecture was delivered in the context of the second Course of the Associate Programme, organized by the OPCW. For this programme, the OPCW had selected 12 participants originating from the same number of countries, working in the chemical field.
16. 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.
17. With regard to the HS classification of the 932 chemicals enumerated in Part A of the OPCW Handbook on Chemicals, which was examined by the Committee at its 27<sup>th</sup> Session, the Secretariat asked the OPCW Secretariat for additional information. The comments of the OPCW Secretariat are reflected in the working document NC0446E1 prepared for this session of the Committee (Agenda Item VII.3).

### III. CONCLUSION

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