

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Committee on Tariff Concessions

Original: English

STATEMENT MADE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL AT THE MEETING  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON 19 JULY 1985

As you well know, it is more than two years since the Harmonized System Convention was approved by the Customs Co-operation Council and the Council every effort to have the Harmonized System implemented as of 1 January 1987.

For many countries GATT Article XXVIII negotiations are an essential first step before they can move on toward the adoption of the Harmonized System. It was for this reason that, at its Seoul Session in 1984, the Council expressed the wish that the GATT Article XXVIII negotiations should be concluded in due course so that the Harmonized System could enter into force on 1 January 1987.

At its last session in June 1985, the Council again urged administrations to make every effort with a view to implementing the Harmonized System on 1 January 1987.

In March of this year, the Secretary General received a letter from Mr. Dunkel, the Director-General of the GATT, relating to the GATT negotiations and the implementation of the Harmonized System Convention. In this letter, the Director General of the GATT fully endorsed the view that the introduction of the Harmonized System would be highly beneficial to all countries engaged in international trade and that its implementation would at the same time considerably facilitate future tariff negotiations in the GATT. He further stated that it was for these reasons that at the annual meeting held at ministerial level in November 1982, the GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES recommended prompt action towards the introduction of the Harmonized System. They also decided that the negotiations under Article XXVIII which have to be carried out by a number of countries prior to their adoption of the new System should be initiated promptly so as to avoid any undue delay in the implementation of the System.

The Customs Co-operation Council has been very much encouraged by the positive efforts being made by the GATT for the prompt implementation of the Harmonized System and I am pleased to say that the Council is quite prepared to give technical advice, if so requested, in the course of Article XXVIII negotiations.

This being said, Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Tariff Committee of the CCC activities, particularly of the following four points, i.e. (1) the latest position concerning signatories to the Harmonized System Convention, (2) the publication of the Correlation

Tables and the new Explanatory Notes, (3) the progress report concerning tariff transposition and (4) the future work programme concerning the Harmonized System.

On 10 June 1985, the first day of the last Session of the Council, we organized a joint signing ceremony and many countries and the European Community signed the Convention. As a result the Harmonized System Convention now has the following thirty-four signatories:

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Burundi, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (Fed. Rep. of), Ghana, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Liberia, Korea (Rep. of), Luxembourg, Mauritius, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, the United Kingdom, and the European Community.

Of these thirty-four signatories, two countries, Jordan and Mauritius, signed the Convention without reservation of ratification and they have thus become the Contracting Parties to the Harmonized System Convention. The Convention therefore needs fifteen more Contracting Parties in order to become effective.

The second point concerns our publications. As you know, the Correlation Tables between the present CCCN and the Harmonized System were published last May. As regards the Explanatory Notes to the Harmonized System, the Council approved the Explanatory Notes at its last session in June and it is expected that the printed version will be available by the end of this year. The Notes must be very beneficial to all users of the Harmonized System.

The third point concerns the progress report concerning tariff transpositions. The Council Secretariat has so far received reports from thirty-four developing countries, most of which have already decided to use the Harmonized System or have taken steps towards the use of the Harmonized System. Many of these developing countries have already started to prepare their new Customs Tariff on the basis of the Harmonized System. Since the beginning of this year, the Council Secretariat has already given technical assistance to developing countries such as Malaysia, Malawi, Nigeria, Philippines and Senegal. Malaysia has completed its draft new tariff on the basis of the Harmonized System. This activity will be continued and will even be strengthened.

As regards the fourth point, I would touch upon our programme of future work concerning the Harmonized System. Since the Explanatory Notes and the Correlation tables have been completed, we will now give priority to the preparation of an Alphabetical Index and the new Compendium of Classification Opinions, these being also important complementary publications to the Harmonized System.

At any rate, with the completion of the Explanatory Notes, I would stress that the Harmonized System as such is now ready for implementation and the Council is eager to see its prompt implementation.

Finally, before concluding I would like to underline the very close co-operation we have had between the two international organizations, the GATT and the CCC.