

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON

RESTRICTED

TAR/223

23 October 1992

TARIFFS AND TRADE

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON TARIFF CONCESSIONS

1. The Committee on Tariff Concessions, under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. de la Peña (Mexico) held one formal meeting on 21 October 1992.
2. The Committee pursued its examination of the status of implementation of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (Harmonized System) by the GATT contracting parties and noted that since the formal introduction of the Harmonized System on 1 January 1988, eighty-nine contracting parties, out of a total of 105, had decided to apply the Harmonized System. However, only nineteen countries, plus the European Communities, had a certified schedule in the nomenclature of the Harmonized System. Some of these schedules were, moreover, incomplete; information related to the initial negotiating rights (INRs) and the legal instruments containing the concessions were still missing. The Committee expressed its disappointment that very little progress had been made in this area.
3. The Committee also noted that fifteen countries were presently under waivers after having implemented the Harmonized System, and were carrying out consultations and negotiations under Article XXVIII. A new Geneva (1992) Protocol had been opened for the annexation of HS schedules, to which two countries had up to now attached their HS schedules; delegations were asked to accelerate the process of ongoing negotiations and consultations in order to have their HS schedules approved and annexed to the Protocol. The Committee regretted that several contracting parties having a GATT schedule had implemented the Harmonized System without having followed GATT procedures and urged them to submit the required documentation (see Annex).
4. Following the adoption by the CONTRACTING PARTIES in October 1991 of a text containing the procedures for incorporating changes in the Harmonized System affecting GATT Schedules, which came into force on 1 January 1992 (see document L/6905), the Committee noted that eleven delegations had submitted the notifications related to the HS changes in their schedules. These notifications were circulated in documents SECRET/HS/1 to 11. All the proposed changes were adopted and the certification of these changes will be made shortly. Countries which had not yet notified the HS changes were urged to do so without further delay. One delegation informed the Committee that the proposed HS changes had been approved by his authorities recently and would only be implemented on 1 January 1993. The required documentation would be submitted to the Secretariat before the end of the year. Another delegation explained that the proposed changes had not been enacted yet and that some technical problems related to the possible increase of the bound duties remained to be solved.

5. The representative of the Customs Co-operation Council in Brussels informed the Committee that for the past three years, the CCC had been undertaking a review of the Harmonized System to keep it up-to-date with the changes in technology and in patterns of international trade. A review sub-committee was in charge of preparing a recommendation to the Council for changes in the HS. This recommendation, which was expected to involve substantive changes, would enter into force in January 1996. In view of the impact of these changes on GATT Schedules, the CCC would prepare, as early as possible, correlation tables between the 1992 and 1996 versions of the Harmonized System.

6. With a view to updating and completing the Secretariat's collection of national tariffs currently in use, the Chairman requested the delegations which had not submitted any recent tariff documentation, to provide the Tariff Division with two copies on paper, and if available in electronic form, the diskettes or tapes of their most recent applied customs tariffs. The Secretariat would contact the delegations concerned to this effect.

ANNEX

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date of introduction of HS</u>
Benin	1 January 1992
Burkina Faso	1 January 1992
Côte d'Ivoire	1 January 1992
Cuba ¹	1 January 1991
Haiti	1 January 1990
Iceland ¹	1 January 1988
India	28 February 1986
Madagascar	1 January 1988
Mauritania	1 January 1992
Myanmar	1 April 1992
Niger	1 January 1992
Nigeria	15 March 1988
South Africa ¹	1 January 1988
Venezuela	31 March 1990
Zambia	1 January 1988

¹HS documentation submitted, but HS schedule not yet certified.