

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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INTRODUCTION OF HARMONIZED SYSTEM CHANGES INTO WTO SCHEDULES OF TARIFF CONCESSIONS ON 1 JANUARY 1996

Israel – Schedule XLII

Request for a Waiver

The following communication, dated 11 February 2004, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Israel.

Israel requests the granting of an extension of the waiver with respect to the introduction of HS96 changes in its schedule of concessions. This need is due to the fact that there is still a reservation pending on Israel's documentation, presented by the EC.

The original waiver was granted to Israel on 13 May 2002 by Decision WT/L/455, and expired on 31 October 2002. Subsequently, an extension was conceded to Israel by Decision WT/L/487, dated 15 October 2002, which expired on 30 April 2003. A new extension was granted by Decision WT/L/531 that expired on 31 October 2003. Finally the General Council, on 16 December 2003 conceded a new extension, by Decision WT/L/554, due to expire on 30 April 2004.

Previously, Israel had been granted a waiver and extensions in a collective basis, as follows: WT/L/124 + WT/L/173+ WT/L/216+ WT/L/243+ WT/L/268+ WT/L/281+ WT/L/303+ WT/L/338+ WT/L/351+ WT/L/379+ WT/L/400.

With respect to the 1996 changes on the Harmonized System-Schedule XLII, Israel has submitted the following documents: G/SECRET/HS96/26 dated 8 October 1996; G/SECRET/HS96/26/Add.1 dated 5 March 1999 and G/SECRET/HS96/26/Add.1/Corr.1 dated 6 July 2000.

In this regard, general reservations were presented by: US (dated 8.11.1996); EC (dated 6.12.1996, and specified concerns on 3.10.2000); Australia (dated 12.12.1996) and Canada (dated 6.01.1997, and specified concerns on 17.02.2000).

The reservations by Australia, Canada and US have been withdrawn or expired. The reservation by the EC is, nevertheless, still pending.

On February 2002 Israel submitted its responses to the EC questions and concerns regarding HS 96. On 4 September 2002, the EC specified two further concerns with respect to the answers provided, which Israel will respond to as soon as possible.

Since it is not clear whether the EC will be able to remove its reservation before the expiration date of the current waiver, notably 30 April 2004, Israel is in need of requesting a further extension, and will do its best to provide the requested explanations in the shortest possible time, in the hope that this will lead to the removal of the reservation in the near future.
