



20 November 2020

(20-8427)

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## REPORT (2020) OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE FACILITATION TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS

1. The Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA) entered into force on 22 February 2017. This report covers the period from 17 October 2019 to 22 October 2020.

2. During the period under review, the Committee on Trade Facilitation (TFC) held four formal meetings: on 11 February (G/TFA/M/10); on 20 February (G/TFA/M/11); on 28 February (G/TFA/M/12) and on 20 to 22 October (G/TFA/M/13<sup>1</sup>). The TFC held an informal meeting on 30 September.

3. The meetings of 11, 20 and 28 of February were chaired by Ambassador Mohammad HAQJO (Afghanistan). The remaining meetings were chaired by his successor Ambassador Katrina NAUT (Dominican Republic) who was elected on 30 July as Chair of the Committee for 2020.

4. During the period under review, the work of the TFC focused on three mains areas: matters relating to the implementation and administration of the TFA; experience sharing/thematic discussions; and updates on relevant activities from TFAF and other organizations.

### *Matters relating to the implementation and administration of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)*

5. Seven ratifications were received during the period under review, bringing the total number of ratifications to 153 Members (93% of the Membership).

6. With regard to the implementation and administration of the TFA, the Committee's work was focused on notifications. Developing and least developed country Members invoking the special flexibilities of the TFA are required to notify their implementation commitments to the Committee in accordance with Articles 15 and 16 of the TFA. The Committee discussed the implementation of the Agreement, it analysed progress made, and highlighted remaining work to be done. Some Members drew attention to the upcoming implementation notification deadlines and to the challenges related to meeting those deadlines. They reminded Members of the availability of assistance to help address such challenges. A total of 59 notifications under Articles 15 and 16 were received during the period under review.

7. The meetings of the 20 and 28 February were convened under Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the General Council, which through its own rules of procedure, apply *mutatis mutandis* to the TFC. In accordance with the TFA, least developed countries must present their definitive dates for the implementation of category B provisions by 22 February 2020. However, under article 16.2 (b) of the TFA, least developed country Members may request the Committee to grant them an extension of that deadline. One least developed country Member notified the Committee on 13 February 2020 that it wished to request an extension. Between 19 and 20 February, an additional six least developed country Members also submitted requests for an extension to the deadline. Accordingly, in order to make a decision before the 22 February 2020 deadline, the Committee met on 20 February.

8. Subsequent to the meeting of 20 February, the Committee received two further notifications of requests for extension on 21 February 2020 and the Committee held a second meeting under Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure on 28 February.

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<sup>1</sup> To be issued.

9. The Committee agreed to all nine requests for an extension of the deadline.<sup>2</sup> During the period under review, three Members<sup>3</sup> submitted their notifications in accordance with their extended deadlines. The remaining extensions were granted up to 22 February 2021.

10. The Committee received six additional requests for an extension of definitive dates for implementation of category B and C commitments under article 17 of the TFA ("Early Warning Mechanism"). The requests from Nicaragua (G/TFA/N/NIC/4), Pakistan (G/TFA/N/PAK/1/Add.3) and the Philippines (G/TFA/N/PHL/1/Add.1) did not exceed 18 months. In line with article 17:2 of the TFA, those Members were entitled to the requested additional time without any further action by the Committee. The request from St. Kitts and Nevis (G/TFA/N/KNA/1/Add.1) sought additional implementation time exceeding 18 months. No objection was raised and one Member expressed approval of the request. Requests for extension had also been made by Bahrain (G/TFA/N/BHR/1/Add.1) and Samoa (G/TFA/N/WSM/1/Add.2). One Member said that both requests had not been made within the timeframe set out by article 17:1 of the TFA, which requires requests to be notified to the Committee no later than 120 days before the expiration of the previously notified implementation date. Another Member expressed the same view with regard to Bahrain's request.

11. The TFC held an informal meeting on 30 September to discuss the trade facilitation measures that Members had implemented in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty Members informed the Committee of the measures that they had implemented. In addition, at the invitation of the Chairperson, a number of other entities, the International Trade Centre, the World Bank, the World Customs Organization, the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (which are Annex D trade facilitation partners) and the Global Alliance<sup>4</sup> updated the membership on their COVID-19 trade facilitation work.

12. During the period under review, 56 transparency notifications were received in accordance with the following provisions: Art.1.4 (import, export and transit procedures); Art.10.4.3 (single window); Art.10.6.2 (customs brokers) and Art.12.2.2 (exchange of customs information). A number of Members emphasised that transparency notifications must be notified in a timely manner, in accordance with Members' individual implementation plans. Those Members also called for an improvement in the quality of the information notified under the transparency notifications.

13. In accordance with Article 22 (22.1 and 22.2) of the TFA which requires donor Members to notify information regarding their technical assistance arrangements and the process and mechanisms to receive assistance, five donor Members submitted notifications. Article 22.3 requires beneficiary Members to notify contact details with regards to technical assistance and 18 developing and least developed country Members submitted notifications under this article.

14. During its meeting of 11 February, the Committee took note of its first trade concern. The Kyrgyz Republic raised concerns regarding the situation at its borders with Kazakhstan as a result of Kazakhstan's treatment of goods transiting through the Kyrgyz Republic to the Russian Federation. As both countries are Members of the Eurasian Economic Union, Kazakhstan considered that the issue should be addressed within that framework.

#### *Experience sharing/thematic discussions*

15. The Committee holds experience sharing and thematic discussions as part of its regular meetings. During the period under review, Members shared their experiences on items such as (i) National Trade Facilitation Committees; (ii) Article 3 – Advanced rulings; (iii) Article 7.6 - Average released times; (iv) Articles 1.1 and 1.2 - Publication and Information available through internet; and (v) measures adopted by Members in response to COVID-19. More details on the information and experience sharing discussions can be found on the TFA database.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Lao PDR, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Solomon Islands.

<sup>3</sup> Afghanistan, Senegal and Solomon Islands.

<sup>4</sup> The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation is a public-private partnership dedicated to international trade facilitation, led by the Center for International Private Enterprise, the International Chamber of Commerce and the World Economic Forum, in cooperation with Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It is funded by the governments of the United States, Canada, Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Australia.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.tfadatabase.org/trade-facilitation-committee/experience-sharing/key-points>

*Reporting by TFAF and other organizations*

16. The Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF) and Annex D organizations updated the Committee on their activities at the meetings of 11 February and 20 to 22 October. Following their oral presentations at the February meetings, the Committee agreed that all future updates by the TFAF and Annex D organizations would be provided in a written report, circulated to the Members before the subsequent Committee meeting. The reason for this change in format was to allow Members more time to analyse the reports and allow for greater discussion at the Committee. Consequently, their reports to the Committee's October session were circulated ahead of the meeting in written documents.<sup>6</sup>

17. The TFAF Annual Report for 2019 and the workplan for 2020 were also circulated prior to the October meeting.<sup>7</sup> A Member expressed the view that the work plan should not proceed, nor disbursements made, until Members are provided an opportunity to draft a workplan that reflects their view of the appropriate use of resources.

*Dedicated session on assistance and capacity building*

18. In accordance with the provision of Article 21.4 of the Agreement, the Committee held an annual dedicated session on assistance and capacity building on 22 October 2020. The items discussed included: exchanges on any implementation problems; a review of progress in the provision of assistance and support for capacity building to support the implementation of the TFA; sharing experiences and information on ongoing assistance and support for capacity building and implementation programs, including challenges and successes; and reviewing the operation of Article 21:2 (assistance and support for LDCs). At the request of one Member, the review of donor notifications as set forth in Article 22 of the TFA was taken up during the regular session.

19. Members shared their experiences on: trade facilitation considerations for the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union during the COVID-19 pandemic; partnerships with Annex D+ organizations; progress on TACB activities carried out by Members; information portals; Aid for Trade; and National Trade Facilitation Committees.

*Draft Annual Report to the Council for Trade in Goods.*

20. The Committee adopted the Annual Report to the Council for Trade in Goods (G/TFA/W/27) and requested the Secretariat to update it to take account of the October meeting.

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<sup>6</sup> G/TFA/W/28 and G/TFA/W/29

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.tfafacility.org/annual-report-2019\\_and\\_RD/TF/1](https://www.tfafacility.org/annual-report-2019_and_RD/TF/1)

**ANNEX I: NOTIFICATIONS FROM MEMBERS SINCE THE LAST ANNUAL REPORT UNTIL  
22 OCTOBER 2020**

**1 NOTIFICATIONS UNDER ARTICLES 15 AND 16 OF THE TRADE FACILITATION  
AGREEMENT**

**1.1 Implementation notifications (categories A, B, C)**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Document symbol</b>	<b>Date of issuance</b>	<b>Area covered</b>		
			<b>Cat. A</b>	<b>Cat. B</b>	<b>Cat. C</b>
India	G/TFA/N/IND/1/Add.1	08/10/2020		X	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	G/TFA/N/KNA/1/Add.1	08/10/2020		X	X
Tanzania	G/TFA/N/TZA/2	05/10/2020		X	X
Senegal	G/TFA/N/SEN/1/Add.2	03/09/2020		X	
Philippines	G/TFA/N/PHL/1/Add.1	28/08/2020			X
Lao People's Democratic Republic	G/TFA/N/LAO/1/Add.4	05/08/2020		X	
Solomon Islands	G/TFA/N/SLB/1/Add.1	09/07/2020		X	X
Pakistan	G/TFA/N/PAK/1/Add.3	30/06/2020			X
Samoa	G/TFA/N/WSM/1/Add.2	30/06/2020		X	
Macao, China	G/TFA/N/MAC/1/Add.2	26/05/2020		X	
Afghanistan	G/TFA/N/AFG/1/Add.2	18/05/2020		X	X
Rwanda	G/TFA/N/RWA/1/Add.2	30/04/2020			X
Angola	G/TFA/N/AGO/1/Add.1/Corr.1	10/03/2020		X	X
Burundi	G/TFA/N/BDI/1/Corr.1	03/03/2020	X	X	X
Angola	G/TFA/N/AGO/1/Add.1	28/02/2020		X	X
Bahrain, Kingdom of	G/TFA/N/BHR/1/Add.1	28/02/2020			X
Mauritania	G/TFA/N/MRT/1/Add.1/Corr.1	27/02/2020		Y	
Benin	G/TFA/N/BEN/2	21/02/2020	X	X	X
Cambodia	G/TFA/N/KHM/1/Add.1	21/02/2020	X	X	X
Lesotho	G/TFA/N/LSO/1/Add.1	21/02/2020		X	X
Madagascar	G/TFA/N/MDG/1/Add.2	21/02/2020		X	X
Mauritania	G/TFA/N/MRT/1/Add.1	21/02/2020		X	
Myanmar	G/TFA/N/MMR/1/Add.1	21/02/2020		X	
Sierra Leone	G/TFA/N/SLE/1/Add.1	21/02/2020		X	
Burkina Faso	G/TFA/N/BFA/1/Add.2	20/02/2020		X	
Djibouti	G/TFA/N/DJI/1/Add.1	20/02/2020		X	
Nepal	G/TFA/N/NPL/1/Add.1	20/02/2020		X	
Senegal	G/TFA/N/SEN/1/Add.1	20/02/2020		X	
Solomon Islands	G/TFA/N/SLB/1	20/02/2020		X	
Togo	G/TFA/N/TGO/1/Add.1	20/02/2020		X	
Vanuatu	G/TFA/N/VUT/1/Add.1	20/02/2020	X	X	X
Afghanistan	G/TFA/N/AFG/1/Add.1	19/02/2020		X	
Bangladesh	G/TFA/N/BGD/1/Add.3	19/02/2020		X	
Burundi	G/TFA/N/BDI/1	19/02/2020	X	X	X
Chad	G/TFA/N/TCD/1	19/02/2020		X	
Niger	G/TFA/N/NER/2/Add.1	19/02/2020		X	X
Rwanda	G/TFA/N/RWA/1/Add.1	19/02/2020		X	

Member	Document symbol	Date of issuance	Area covered		
			Cat. A	Cat. B	Cat. C
Guinea	G/TFA/N/GIN/1	13/02/2020	X	X	X
Lao People's Democratic Republic	G/TFA/N/LAO/1/Add.3	13/02/2020		X	
Gambia, The	G/TFA/N/GMB/1/Add.1	05/02/2020		X	
Brunei Darussalam	G/TFA/N/BRN/1/Add.2	30/01/2020		X	
Bangladesh	G/TFA/N/BGD/1/Add.2	15/01/2020		X	X
China	G/TFA/N/CHN/1/Add.5	15/01/2020		X	
Uganda	G/TFA/N/UGA/1	15/01/2020	X	X	X
China	G/TFA/N/CHN/1/Add.4	10/01/2020		X	
Central African Republic	G/TFA/N/CAF/1/Add.2	20/12/2019		X	X
Maldives	G/TFA/N/MDV/3	09/12/2019	X	X	X
Burkina Faso	G/TFA/N/BFA/1/Add.1	03/12/2019	X	X	X
Mali	G/TFA/N/MLI/1/Add.1	28/11/2019		X	X
Morocco	G/TFA/N/MAR/1/Add.1	28/11/2019		X	X
Zambia	G/TFA/N/ZMB/1/Corr.1	04/11/2019		X	X
Zambia	G/TFA/N/ZMB/1	23/10/2019		X	X
Kenya	G/TFA/N/KEN/1	22/10/2019		X	X
Albania	G/TFA/N/ALB/1/Add.1	18/10/2019		X	X
Democratic Republic of the Congo	G/TFA/N/COD/1	18/10/2019		X	X

## 1.2 Donor arrangements and progress in the provision of Technical Assistance and capacity building support

Member	Document symbol	Date of issuance	Notification type	
			Donor Arrangements + Progress	Other
Nicaragua	G/TFA/N/NIC/4	12/08/2020	Donor Arrangements + Progress	
Ukraine	G/TFA/N/UKR/4	18/02/2020	Donor Arrangements + Progress	
Maldives	G/TFA/N/MDV/4	16/01/2020	Donor Arrangements + Progress	
Bangladesh	G/TFA/N/BGD/2/Rev.1	15/01/2020	Donor Arrangements + Progress	

## 2 NOTIFICATIONS UNDER ARTICLES 1:4, 10:4:3, 10:6:2 AND 12:2:2 OF THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT

Member	Symbol	Date of issuance	Areas covered			
			1.4	10.4.3	10.6.2	12.2.2
European Union	G/TFA/N/EU/1/Add.1/Rev.1	14/10/2020	X	X	X	X
Malaysia	G/TFA/N/MYS/2	14/10/2020	X	X	X	X
Switzerland	G/TFA/N/CHE/2/Rev.1	08/10/2020	X	X	X	X
Thailand	G/TFA/N/THA/2/Rev.1	08/10/2020	X	X	X	X
Argentina	G/TFA/N/ARG/2/Rev.3	05/10/2020	X	X	X	X
Armenia	G/TFA/N/ARM/3	23/09/2020			X	
China	G/TFA/N/CHN/2/Rev.4	18/09/2020	X		X	
Antigua and Barbuda	G/TFA/N/ATG/3	17/09/2020			X	
Vanuatu	G/TFA/N/VUT/2/Rev.1	15/09/2020	X			
Norway	G/TFA/N/NOR/2/Rev.1	09/09/2020	X	X	X	X
Senegal	G/TFA/N/SEN/3	07/09/2020		X	X	X

<b>Member</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Date of issuance</b>	<b>Areas covered</b>			
			<b>1.4</b>	<b>10.4.3</b>	<b>10.6.2</b>	<b>12.2.2</b>
Ecuador	G/TFA/N/ECU/2/Add.1/Rev.1	26/08/2020	X			
Chile	G/TFA/N/CHL/2/Rev.2	24/08/2020	X	X	X	X
Mauritius	G/TFA/N/MUS/2/Rev.1	18/08/2020	X	X	X	X
Uruguay	G/TFA/N/URY/2/Rev.1	18/08/2020	X	X	X	X
Honduras	G/TFA/N/HND/3/Rev.1	12/08/2020	X	X	X	X
Moldova, Republic of	G/TFA/N/MDA/2/Rev.1	04/08/2020	X		X	X
North Macedonia	G/TFA/N/MKD/1/Rev.3	31/07/2020	X	X	X	X
Kyrgyz Republic	G/TFA/N/KGZ/1/Rev.1	21/07/2020	X	X	X	X
Israel	G/TFA/N/ISR/1/Rev.1	15/07/2020	X	X	X	X
Cote d'Ivoire	G/TFA/N/CIV/3	10/07/2020	X	X	X	X
Korea, Republic of	G/TFA/N/KOR/1/Rev.1	10/07/2020	X	X	X	X
Macao, China	G/TFA/N/MAC/2/Rev.1	10/07/2020	X	X	X	X
Chinese Taipei	G/TFA/N/TPKM/1/Rev.2	10/07/2020	X	X	X	X
Tajikistan	G/TFA/N/TJK/2	10/07/2020	X	X	X	X
European Union	G/TFA/N/EU/1/Rev.4	09/07/2020	X	X	X	X
Australia	G/TFA/N/AUS/1/Rev.2	29/06/2020	X	X	X	X
Guyana	G/TFA/N/GUY/2/Rev.1	29/06/2020	X	X	X	X
Argentina	G/TFA/N/ARG/2/Rev.2	22/06/2020	X			
Turkey	G/TFA/N/TUR/2/Rev.1	10/06/2020	X	X	X	X
Dominican Republic	G/TFA/N/DOM/3/Rev.1	05/06/2020	X	X		
Chinese Taipei	G/TFA/N/TPKM/1/Rev.1	26/05/2020	X			
Sri Lanka	G/TFA/N/LKA/3	08/05/2020			X	
European Union	G/TFA/N/EU/1/Rev.3	08/05/2020	X			
Cambodia	G/TFA/N/KHM/2	30/04/2020			X	X
China	G/TFA/N/CHN/2/Rev.3	30/04/2020	X		X	
European Union	G/TFA/N/EU/1/Rev.2	09/04/2020	X			
Central African Republic	G/TFA/N/CAF/2	04/03/2020			X	
Vanuatu	G/TFA/N/VUT/2	02/03/2020	X			
Honduras	G/TFA/N/HND/3	28/02/2020	X			
Thailand	G/TFA/N/THA/3	26/02/2020				X
Guatemala	G/TFA/N/GTM/3	05/02/2020		X	X	X
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Chile	G/TFA/N/SAU/2	23/01/2020	X	X	X	X
China	G/TFA/N/CHN/4	10/01/2020		X		X
Ecuador	G/TFA/N/ECU/4	09/01/2020				X
Nicaragua	G/TFA/N/NIC/3	06/01/2020	X	X	X	X
Ecuador	G/TFA/N/ECU/2/Add.1	20/12/2019	X			
Tunisia	G/TFA/N/TUN/2	17/12/2019			X	
Mongolia	G/TFA/N/MNG/2/Add.1	12/12/2019			X	X
Argentina	G/TFA/N/ARG/2/Rev.1	11/12/2019	X	X	X	X
Saint Lucia	G/TFA/N/LCA/3	02/12/2019				X
Oman	G/TFA/N/OMN/2	07/11/2019	X	X	X	X
Pakistan	G/TFA/N/PAK/2/Add.1	04/11/2019				X

Member	Symbol	Date of issuance	Areas covered			
			1.4	10.4.3	10.6.2	12.2.2
Colombia	G/TFA/N/COL/2	30/10/2019	X	X	X	X
Botswana	G/TFA/N/BWA/2	22/10/2019			X	X
Paraguay	G/TFA/N/PRY/3	22/10/2019		X	X	X
Albania	G/TFA/N/ALB/2	18/10/2019	X		X	X

**3 NOTIFICATIONS UNDER ARTICLE 22 OF THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT BY DONOR MEMBERS**

**Donor**

Member	Document symbol	Date of issuance	Notification type
Canada	G/TFA/N/CAN/4	08/10/2020	(Articles 22.1 and/or 22.2)
United States of America	G/TFA/N/USA/4	08/10/2020	(Articles 22.1 and/or 22.2)
Australia	G/TFA/N/AUS/4	21/07/2020	(Articles 22.1 and/or 22.2)
Japan	G/TFA/N/JPN/5	27/03/2020	(Articles 22.1 and/or 22.2)
China	G/TFA/N/CHN/3	18/10/2019	(Articles 22.1 and/or 22.2)

**Developing and least developed country Members**

Member	Document symbol	Date of issuance	Notification type
Antigua and Barbuda	G/TFA/N/ATG/2	17/09/2020	Article 22.3
Honduras	G/TFA/N/HND/2/Rev.1	15/09/2020	Article 22.3
Senegal	G/TFA/N/SEN/2	07/09/2020	Article 22.3
Cote d'Ivoire	G/TFA/N/CIV/2	10/07/2020	Article 22.3
Tanzania	G/TFA/N/TZA/1	01/07/2020	Article 22.3
Sri Lanka	G/TFA/N/LKA/2/Rev.1	08/05/2020	Article 22.3
Cambodia	G/TFA/N/KHM/3	30/04/2020	Article 22.3
Jamaica	G/TFA/N/JAM/2/Rev.1	02/04/2020	Article 22.3
Tonga	G/TFA/N/TON/2/Rev.2	19/03/2020	Article 22.3
Eswatini, Kingdom of	G/TFA/N/SWZ/3	17/03/2020	Article 22.3
Honduras	G/TFA/N/HND/2	28/02/2020	Article 22.3
Angola	G/TFA/N/AGO/2	19/02/2020	Article 22.3
Nepal	G/TFA/N/NPL/3	19/02/2020	Article 22.3
Jamaica	G/TFA/N/JAM/2	13/02/2020	Article 22.3
Benin	G/TFA/N/BEN/1	30/01/2020	Article 22.3
Burkina Faso	G/TFA/N/BFA/2	04/12/2019	Article 22.3
Nicaragua	G/TFA/N/NIC/2	20/11/2019	Article 22.3
Pakistan	G/TFA/N/PAK/3	04/11/2019	Article 22.3