

Council for Trade in Goods
14 April 1997

Original: English

SRI LANKA - ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW SCHEDULE VI

Request for Extension of Time-Limit

The following communication, dated 20 March 1997, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka.

I refer to your fax of 14 March 1997 on the above subject. I furnish below the factual information being requested with regard to Sri Lanka's request for an extension of the time-limit for the current waiver.

1. Date of original waiver: 8 November 1988¹.
2. Date of submission of documents relevant to the HS implementation: 12 January 1990².
3. Number of extensions and dates when granted: fourteen extensions, as follows: 24/07/89; 16/07/90; 07/12/90; 01/07/91; 04/12/91; 20/07/92; 03/12/92; 19/07/93; 17/01/94; 21/07/94; 09/12/94; 31/08/95; 13/12/95 and 18/07/96.
4. Number of countries with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been initiated: four (Australia, European Union, New Zealand and United States).
5. Number of countries with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been concluded: none.
6. Status of outstanding Article XXVIII negotiations as well as a general outline of relevant problems: The present position is that although, a counter offer was received recently from one country, a further few rounds of negotiations will be required to finalize negotiations with the remaining countries with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been initiated. While every effort is being made to conclude negotiations as early as possible, it is unlikely that they will be concluded by 30 April 1997.

¹BISD, 35S/22.

²SECRET/HS/26.

7. Outlook for concluding the process: although the authorities in Sri Lanka were continuing the preparatory work for further negotiations, the security situation coupled with the holding of island-wide local government elections in the month of March 1997, has placed constraints on completing the preparatory work for the negotiations to be held. Furthermore, the counter offer received from one of the parties needs to be studied in depth in view of its extremely high political sensitivity. Therefore, the Government of Sri Lanka will require more time to complete these studies. As the process of preparatory work is already in progress, this work is also expected to be completed in a few months time.

In view of the above circumstances, Sri Lanka will require a further extension of six months from 1 May 1997, to conclude the negotiations. Sri Lanka wishes to extend its appreciation to the countries concerned for the understanding shown and wishes to assure them that these negotiations will be finalized to the satisfaction of all parties concerned within the stipulated time.