



17 October 2017

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## **REPORT (2017) OF THE COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS**

1. Since the last review<sup>1</sup>, the Committee on Market Access has held two formal meetings (2 May and 22 September 2017) and three informal meetings (9 March, 23 June, and 22 September 2017). The minutes of the formal meetings are contained in documents G/MA/M/65 and G/MA/M/66 (to be issued).
2. At its meeting of 2 May 2017, the Committee took note that the consultations in the Council for Trade in Goods concerning the Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies remained ongoing, and agreed that, once the issue had been resolved, the Secretariat would send a fax with the proposed candidate and set a deadline for objections. On 11 May 2017, the Secretariat circulated a fax informing Members that Mr Ahmed El Libedy (Egypt) had been nominated, and on 12 May 2017 he was elected. At its meeting of 22 September 2017, the Committee elected Mr Michael Cannon (Canada) as Vice Chairperson.

### **1 WAIVERS**

3. At its formal meeting of 22 September 2017, the Committee approved the extension of the HS2002 "collective" waiver (G/C/W/741), the HS2007 "collective" waiver (G/C/W/742), the HS2012 "collective" waiver (G/C/W/743), and the HS2017 "collective" waiver (G/C/W/744 and G/C/W/744/Corr.1). The Committee agreed to forward the draft waiver decisions to the General Council through the Council for Trade in Goods for appropriate action.

### **2 INTRODUCTION OF HARMONIZED SYSTEM 1996 (HS1996) CHANGES TO SCHEDULES OF CONCESSIONS**

4. At its meetings in 2017, the Committee took note of the status of the HS1996 transposition work undertaken pursuant to the procedures contained in L/6905 and WT/L/756.

### **3 INTRODUCTION OF HARMONIZED SYSTEM 2002 (HS2002) CHANGES TO SCHEDULES OF CONCESSIONS**

5. At its meetings in 2017, the Committee took note of the status of work concerning the introduction of HS2002 changes to schedules of concessions using the CTS database (WT/L/605 and WT/L/807), as well as the outcomes of the informal dedicated sessions of the Committee during which the files containing the HS2002 changes of Members were examined.

### **4 INTRODUCTION OF HARMONIZED SYSTEM 2007 (HS2007) CHANGES TO SCHEDULES OF CONCESSIONS**

6. At its meetings in 2017, the Committee took note of the status of work concerning the introduction of HS2007 changes to schedules of concessions using the CTS database (WT/L/673 and WT/L/830), as well as the outcomes of the informal dedicated sessions of the Committee during which the files containing the HS2007 changes of Members were examined.

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<sup>1</sup> G/L/1154, dated 19 October 2016.

## **5 INTRODUCTION OF HARMONIZED SYSTEM 2012 (HS2012) CHANGES TO SCHEDULES OF CONCESSIONS**

7. At its meetings in 2017, the Committee took note of the status of work concerning the introduction of HS2012 changes to schedules of concessions using the CTS database (WT/L/831), as well as the outcomes of the informal dedicated sessions of the Committee during which the files containing the HS2012 changes of Members were examined. At its 2 May meeting, the Committee agreed to amend "Simplification 2" in the "Notes on Methodology" for this transposition (G/MA/330/Add.1).

## **6 INTRODUCTION OF HARMONIZED SYSTEM 2017 (HS2017) CHANGES TO SCHEDULES OF CONCESSIONS**

8. At its meeting of 2 May, the Committee took note that the Secretariat had prepared the HS2017 reference nomenclature and correlation tables in a standardized format, and that they had been made available for download on the IDB File Exchange Facility.

## **7 DECISION ON NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTIONS ("QR DECISION")**

9. At its meetings in 2017, the Committee examined one new QR notification for the period 2014-2016 that had been submitted by Mauritius, as well as 11 new QR notifications for the period 2016-2018 which had been submitted by Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Singapore, Switzerland, the United States, and Uruguay. The Committee also continued reviewing notifications previously submitted by other Members.

10. At its meeting of 2 May 2017, the Committee took note of a report by the Secretariat entitled "Quantitative Restrictions: Factual Information on Notifications Received" (G/MA/W/114/Rev.1), and discussed how to improve the number and quality of these notifications. At its formal meeting of 22 September 2017, the Committee examined the quantitative restriction notifications submitted by several Members and took note of a report by the Secretariat (G/MA/QR/5), which reflected the status of such notifications. It also took note of a report on the consultations conducted by the Chairman on the issue, and agreed to instruct the Secretariat to update the Practical Guide on QR notifications (JOB/MA/101), to review the WTO webpage and the QR database, and to organize a capacity building workshop on QR notifications back-to-back with the first Committee meeting of 2018.

## **8 DATABASES**

11. At its formal meetings in 2017, the Secretariat reported on the status of work concerning the Integrated Data Base (IDB) and the Consolidated Tariff Schedules (CTS) database. The reports provided information on *inter alia* the use of information in the databases, the status of software development and technical assistance. The Committee also took note of the documents which reflected the status of submissions to the IDB (G/MA>IDB/2/Rev.45 and G/MA>IDB/2/Rev.46).

## **9 DERESTRICTION OF NEGOTIATING MATERIAL OF EARLIER GATT ROUNDS**

12. At its meeting of 2 May, the Committee agreed on procedures for the derestriction of additional negotiating materials from previous multilateral rounds of negotiations (G/MA/334). At its formal meeting of 22 September, the Committee considered a draft "Decision for the Derestriction of Additional Negotiating Materials" (G/MA/W/131), which had been elaborated pursuant to those procedures. The Committee approved the derestriction and agreed to transmit the draft Decision to the General Council, through the Council for Trade in Goods, for adoption.

## **10 OTHER ACTIVITIES**

13. At its meeting of 2 May, the Committee took note of the Secretariat document entitled "Situation of Schedules of WTO Members" (G/MA/W/23/Rev.13 and G/MA/W/23/Rev.13/Corr.1), which lists all legal instruments relating to each Member's schedule. It also took note of the Secretariat document entitled "Factual Report on the Status of Renegotiations under Article XXVIII of the GATT 1994" (G/MA/W/123/Rev.1).

14. At its 2 May meeting, the Committee took note of an action by the Canadian government to unilaterally eliminate certain most-favoured-nation applied tariffs (G/MA/W/130).

15. At its 2 May and 22 September meetings, the Committee took note of the following specific concerns which were raised<sup>2</sup>:

- Angola – Consumption tax; concern raised by the European Union (G/MA/W/129);
  - Argentina – Law on the auto-part sector; concern raised by the European Union and Mexico;
  - China - Customs duties on certain integrated circuits; concern raised by the European Union, Japan, Chinese Taipei, and the United States;
  - China - Import tax on personal effects at the border; concern raised by Japan;
  - India – Customs duties on telecommunication and other products; concern raised by Canada, European Union, Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei, and the United States (GMA/W/120 and G/MA/W/128);
  - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - Excise tax on energy drinks and carbonated soft drink products; concern raised by Switzerland (G/MA/W/132).
  - Oman – MFN customs duties on cigarettes; concern raised by Switzerland; and
  - Russian Federation – Taxation on wine; concern raised by the European Union.
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<sup>2</sup> Includes issues raised under "other business".