

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

G/L/845
7 December 2007

(07-5410)

REPORT (2007) OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS

In accordance with the "Procedures for an Annual Overview of WTO Activities and for Reporting under the WTO" (WT/L/105), the Council for Trade in Goods is to report each year to the General Council on the activities in the Council as well as in the subsidiary bodies. The reports are to be "factual in nature, containing an indication of actions and decisions taken, with cross references to reports of subordinate bodies and could follow the model of the GATT 1947 Council reports to the CONTRACTING PARTIES".

Since the CTG 2006 annual report (G/L/808) was issued, the Council for Trade in Goods has met five times in formal session on the following dates: 30 January 2007 (minutes contained in document G/C/M/87); 19 March 2007 (G/C/M/88); 21 May 2007 (G/C/M/89); 9 July 2007 (G/C/M/90); and 23 November 2007 (G/C/M/91¹).

The subject matters which were raised and/or acted upon in the Council are as follows:

1. Election of Chairperson
2. Appointment of officers
3. Matters of the Committee on Market Access
4. Waivers under Article IX of the WTO Agreement
5. EC enlargement
6. Notification format for regional trade agreements
7. Notification of regional trade agreements
8. Issues related to trade in textiles
9. Thailand - Customs valuation and domestic taxation practices affecting the importation of cigarettes from the Philippines
10. Notifications
11. Transitional Review under Paragraph 18 of the Protocol on the Accession of the People's Republic of China
12. Consideration of annual reports of subsidiary bodies

1. Election of Chairperson for the Council for Trade in Goods

At its meeting of 19 March the Council elected H.E. Ambassador Karsten Vagn Nielsen (Denmark) as its Chairman for 2007.

¹ To be issued.

2. Appointment of Officers for the subsidiary bodies of the Council

At its meeting of 19 March, the Council agreed on the nominations of the following persons for election as Chairpersons of its subsidiary bodies:

Committee on Market Access	Mohammad SAEED (Pakistan)
Committee on Agriculture	Valeria SUCASSI (Uruguay)
Committee on Sanitary & Phytosanitary Measures	Marinus HUIGE (Netherlands)
Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices	Gareth MEYER (Australia)
Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures	Pablo KLEIN (Mexico)
Committee on Safeguards	Jo McKEAGG (New Zealand)
Committee on Import Licensing	Marco J. KASSAJA (Tanzania)
Committee on Rules of Origin	Vera THORSTENSEN (Brazil)
Committee on Customs Valuation	Joe MCCLINTOCK (United Kingdom)
Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade	R. S. SIDHU (India)
Committee on TRIMS	Mathias BOGAERT (Belgium)
Committee on State Trading Enterprises	Pornvit SILA-ON (Thailand)
Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA Committee)	Amr ALJOWAILY (Egypt)

At the same meeting, the Council agreed to proceed on the understanding that as concerns Vice-Chairpersons, it would be for the subsidiary bodies to decide if they needed a Vice-Chairperson in cases where the option existed under the respective Agreement and/or rules of procedure, and for the respective Chairperson to hold the necessary consultations.

At the meeting of 9 July, the Council was informed that Mr. Aljowaily had left Geneva and could no longer serve as Chair of the Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA Committee). The Council agreed on the nomination of Mr. Khalid I. Emara (Egypt) for election as the Chair of the ITA Committee to replace Mr. Aljowaily.

3. Matters of the Committee on Market Access

At its meetings on 21 May and 23 November the Council took note of the periodic reports (in documents G/MA/195 and G/MA/197) of the Committee on Market Access.

4. Waivers under Article IX of the WTO Agreement

- (a) Introduction of Harmonized System 1996 changes into WTO Schedules of tariff concessions
Requests for extensions of waiver (Argentina – G/C/W/576; Panama – G/C/W/575)

At its meeting on 21 May, the Council considered requests from Argentina and Panama for extensions of waivers in connection with the introduction of HS96 changes to their Schedules of concessions. The Council approved the waiver requests and recommended that the draft decisions contained in the cited G/C/W/- documents be forwarded to the General Council for adoption.

- (b) Introduction of Harmonized System 2002 changes into WTO Schedules of tariff concessions
– Requests for a waiver (G/C/W/585/Rev.1)

At its meeting on 23 November, the Council considered a collective request for a waiver in connection with the introduction of HS2002 changes to the Schedules of concessions. The Council

approved the waiver request and recommended that the draft decision contained in G/C/W/585/Rev.1 be forwarded to the General Council for adoption.

- (c) Introduction of Harmonized System 2007 changes into WTO Schedules of tariff concessions
– Requests for a waiver (G/C/W/584)

At its meeting on 23 November, the Council considered a collective request for a waiver in connection with the introduction of HS 2007 changes to the Schedules of concessions. The Council approved the waiver request and recommended that the draft decision contained in G/C/W/584 be forwarded to the General Council for adoption.

- (d) United States – Request for waiver for the African Growth and Opportunity Act, the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, as amended and the ANDEAN Trade Promotion Act, as amended (G/C/W/508/Rev.1; G/C/W/509/Rev.1; G/C/W/510/Rev.1)

At its meeting on 19 March, the United States circulated for consideration revised draft waiver decisions for the three programmes. The Council continued its consideration of these requests and their accompanying draft decisions at its meetings on 19 March, 21 May, 9 July, and 23 November.

- (e) Senegal – Request for an extension of the waiver for continued use of minimum values for customs valuation purposes (G/C/W/581; G/C/W/582)

At its meetings on 9 July and 23 November the Council considered a request from Senegal for an extension of its existing waiver allowing the use of minimum values for customs valuation purposes.

- (f) European Communities – Request for an extension of Article XIII waiver for the tariff rate quota for bananas of ACP origin (G/C/W/529)

At its meeting on 19 March the Council took note of the statements made and agreed to suspend this item until further notice.

- (g) United States – Request for an extension of the waiver for the Former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (G/C/W/570)

At its meetings of 19 March, 21 May, and 9 July, the Council considered a request from the United States for an extension of its existing waiver for the Former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. At its meeting on 9 July, the Council approved the waiver request and recommended that the draft decision contained in G/C/W/570 be forwarded to the General Council for adoption.

- (h) Mongolia – Request for a waiver from the accession commitment on export of raw cashmere (G/C/W/571; G/C/W/580)

At its meeting on 9 July, the Council considered a request from Mongolia for a waiver from its accession commitment on the export of raw cashmere. At this meeting, the Council approved the waiver request and recommended that the draft decision contained in G/C/W/580 be forwarded to the General Council for adoption.

5. EC enlargement (G/L/695/Add.4; G/L/695/Add.5; G/L/695/Add.6; G/L/821; G/L/821/Add.1)

At its meeting on 30 January, the Council agreed on the extension of the deadline set out in the communication from the EC (G/L/695/Add.4). At its meeting on 21 May, the Council agreed on the extension of the deadlines set out in the communications from the EC (G/L/695/Add.5 and G/L/821). At its meeting on 23 November, the Council further agreed on the extension of the deadlines set out in the communications from the EC (G/L/695/Add.6 and G/L/821/Add.1).

6. Notification format for regional trade agreements (WT/REG/16)

At its meeting on 19 March, the Council adopted the notification format for regional trade agreements contained in document WT/REG/16.

7. Notification of Regional Trade Agreements

At its meetings on 21 May, 9 July, and 23 November, the Council took note that the following regional trade agreements had been notified to the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements:

- A. Gulf Cooperation Council Customs Union – notification from Saudi Arabia in document WT/REG222/N/1;
- B. Pan-Arab Free Trade Area Agreement – notification from Saudi Arabia in document WT/REG223/N/1;
- C. Agreement between the EFTA States and the Republic of Lebanon – notification from the Parties in document WT/REG224/N/1;
- D. Agreement between Turkey and Syria – notification from Turkey in document WT/REG/225/N/1;
- E. Agreement between the European Communities and Albania – notification from the Parties in document WT/REG226/N/1;
- F. Agreement between Panama and Singapore – notification from the Parties in document WT/REG227/N/1;
- G. Agreement between India and Singapore – Notification from Singapore in documents WT/REG228/N/1 and S/C/N/393;
- H. Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership – Notification from Singapore in document WT/REG229/N/1;
- I. Agreement between Chile and China - Notification from the Parties in document WT/REG230/N/1;
- J. The South African Customs Union – Notification from Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South African and Swaziland in document WT/REG231/N/1;
- K. Agreement between Japan and the Kingdom of Thailand for an Economic Partnership in document WT/REG235/N/1;

- L. Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Chile for a Strategic Economic Partnership in document WT/REG234/N/1;
- M. Agreement on amendment of and accession to the Central European Free Trade Agreement in document WT/REG233/N/1/Rev.1;
- N. Free Trade Agreement between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the EFTA States in document WT/REG232/N/1.

8. Issues Related to Trade in Textiles (G/C/W/522; G/C/W/549; G/C/W/573 and Corr.1)

At its meetings on 19 March, 21 May, 9 July and 23 November, the Council continued its discussion of the proposals contained in documents G/C/W/549; G/C/W/573 and Corr.1.

9. Thailand - Customs valuation and domestic taxation practices affecting the importation of cigarettes from the Philippines (G/C/W/574)

At its meeting on 19 March, the Council took note of the concerns raised by the Philippines, as circulated in document G/C/W/574, as well as a statement by Switzerland on the above matter.

10. Notifications

Status of notifications under the provisions of the Agreements in Annex 1A of the WTO Agreement

At its meeting on 19 March, the Council took note of the latest revision of the status of notifications contained in document G/L/223/Rev.14.

11. Transitional Review under paragraph 18 of the Protocol on the Accession of the People's Republic of China

At its meeting on 23 November, the Council took note of the reports of the CTG subsidiary bodies which had carried out their reviews, and carried out the CTG-specific review with respect to the information requirements stipulated in Annex 1A of the Protocol of Accession. The Council agreed to send the report (G/L/844), together with the reports of the subsidiary bodies, to the General Council.

12. Consideration of annual reports of subsidiary bodies of the CTG

At its meeting on 23 November, the Council took note of the annual reports of its subsidiary bodies.
