

Committee on Market Access

**PERIODIC REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE
COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS**

1. The Committee met on 20 October 2003 and examined the following issues:
2. The Committee took note of the factual information provided by Members under current waiver requesting extensions for the introduction of HS96 changes to their schedules or the establishment of a new schedule. This information is summarized in Annexes I and II of this report. The Committee approved the requests for waiver extensions and agreed to forward the draft decisions set out in the Annexes to the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG) for appropriate action.
3. The Committee examined the situation related to the submission of HS96 documentation set out in document G/MA/TAR/2/Rev.31. The submission of seven Members, whether they had requested an extension of waivers or not, remained pending due to on-going consultations and/or negotiations. While noting that it had not been possible to hold an informal meeting dedicated to the review of the HS96 situation since the last meeting, the Chair proposed that such a meeting be scheduled in the near future and that the Secretariat would prepare an informal list detailing the situation for the review.
4. The Committee examined the situation related to the circulation of HS2002 documentation set out in document G/MA/TAR/4/Rev.4 and held a discussion on the process for the HS2002 work. The Committee agreed to hold an informal meeting for the purposes of continuing with HS2002 work and to discuss the HS2002 waiver. This agenda item was suspended so that the Committee could take up the issue of the waiver before the end of the year at a re-convened meeting.
5. With reference to the modalities and operation of the Integrated Data Base, the Committee examined the status of IDB submissions on the basis of the document G/MA/IDB/2/Rev.17. The Secretariat reported on the status of IDB dissemination, technical assistance, use and publication of IDB and CTS information, and the status of software development. Delegations were reminded of their notification obligations and in that respect, the Chair would remind delegations in writing of their specific outstanding notifications, in particular those who had not submitted any information or those who had significant gaps of information.
6. The Secretariat reported on the status of the Consolidated Tariff Schedules (CTS) Database and informed the Committee about updating Members' files, creating new files for newly acceded Members, incorporating commitments in the files, and extending the link between the CTS and IDB databases. In respect of the last point, it was noted that the 'link' involved matters of a highly technical nature and therefore it was agreed to have a discussion on these technical matters at the forthcoming informal meeting.
7. The Committee considered the request for access to the IDB and CTS databases from the International Textiles and Clothing Bureau (ITCB) (G/MA/W/48) favourably. However, during the discussions leading to the approval of this request, there was a request to make an inquiry to the ITCB about what possible data it may have that could be shared with the WTO. The Chair would follow-up with a letter to the ITCB on this matter.

8. The Committee conducted the Transitional Review under Paragraph 18 of the Protocol of Accession of the People's Republic of China. Information provided by China under the review was circulated in document G/MA/W/52. It was noted that China also had submitted its notification of Quantitative Restrictions, but some of the information was in Chinese and it would be submitted in English as soon as it was available. Questions and/or comments submitted to China by the European Communities, Japan, and the United States, were circulated in documents G/MA/W/49, G/MA/W/50, and G/MA/W/51, respectively. The Committee agreed to follow the same format as last year with respect to its report on the review to the CTG.

9. The Committee considered the Draft Report (2003) of the Committee to the Council for Trade in Goods (G/MA/SPEC/25). The report would be updated to take into account the discussions at this meeting.

10. The Committee elected Mr. Sebastián Herreros (Chile) as its Vice-Chairperson for 2003.

11. Under other business, the Committee took note of the date of its next meeting.

ANNEX I

FACTUAL INFORMATION RELATING TO WAIVERS REQUESTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTRODUCING HS 96 CHANGES TO SCHEDULES OF CONCESSIONS

Member	Date of original waiver	Date of submission of HS documentation	N° of extensions and dates	N° of Members with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been initiated	N° of Members with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been concluded	Status of outstanding Article XXVIII negotiations	Outlook for concluding the process	Request for a waiver and draft decision
1. Israel	13.12.1995	G/SECRET/HS96/26 (08.10.1996) G/SECRET/HS96/26/Add.1 (05.03.1999) G/SECRET/HS96/26/Add.1/Corr.1 (06.07.2000)	Thirteen 18.07.1996 24.04.1997 22.10.1997 24.04.1998 14.10.1998 15.06.1999 04.11.1999 03.05.2000 08.12.2000 08.05.2001 13.05.2002 15.10.2002 24.07.2003	Four	Three	Israel has to respond to two additional questions by the EC.	Israel will do its best to provide the requested explanations in the shortest possible time so that the EC can remove its reservation.	Requested 6 months. G/L/646 G/C/W/468
2. Thailand	13.12.1995	G/SECRET/HS96/17 (14.03.1996) G/SECRET/HS96/17/Rev.1 (18.10.1996) G/SECRET/HS96/17/Rev.2 (27.11.2001)	Thirteen 18.07.1996 24.04.1997 22.10.1997 24.04.1998 14.10.1998 15.06.1999 04.11.1999 03.05.2000 08.12.2000 08.05.2001 13.05.2002 15.10.2002 24.07.2003	Four	Negotiations had concluded with all four Members. However, negotiations have been re-initiated with two of those Members.	Thailand has recently replied to the questions raised by the two Members.	As Thailand has replied, the request is made for procedural reasons.	Requested 6 months. G/L/647 G/C/W/470

ANNEX II

FACTUAL INFORMATION RELATED TO THE EXTENSION OF WAIVERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING A NEW SCHEDULE

Member	Date of original waiver	Date of submission of HS documentation	N° of extensions and dates	N° of Members with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been initiated	N° of Members with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been concluded	Status of outstanding Article XXVIII negotiations	Outlook for concluding the process	Request for an extension and draft decision
1. Sri Lanka	08.11.1988	12.01.1990 SECRET/HS/26	Twenty-seven: 24.07.1989 16.07.1990 07.12.1990 01.07.1991 04.12.1991 20.07.1992 03.12.1992 19.07.1993 17.01.1994 21.07.1994 09.12.1994 31.08.1995 13.12.1995 18.07.1996 16.07.1997 22.10.1997 24.04.1998 14.10.1998 15.06.1999 04.11.1999 03.05.2000 08.12.2000 08.05.2001 31.10.2001 13.05.2002 15.10.2002 24.07.2003	Five	Four	Sri Lanka continues to make every effort to conclude negotiations under Article XXVIII. The negotiations with the United States are still continuing.	Sri Lanka has had bilateral negotiations with the US in respect of Sri Lanka's Schedule. These negotiations are still continuing. Submissions have been made to the Advisory Committee of the Government of Sri Lanka seeking its approval on tariff bindings to be made. Since a response from the Tariff Advisory Committee is yet to be received, Sri Lanka requires one more extension of time to conclude these negotiations. The Government of Sri Lanka, therefore, will appreciate granting of a further extension of six months. The Government of Sri Lanka also wishes to assure its trading	Extension of 6 months requested G/L/644 G/C/W/469

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							partners that every effort will be made to conclude the negotiations satisfactorily, and in the mutual interest of all concerned, as soon as possible.	
