

**INTRODUCTION OF HARMONIZED SYSTEM 1996 CHANGES
INTO WTO SCHEDULES OF TARIFF CONCESSIONS**

Panama – Schedule CXLI

Request for a Waiver

The following communication, dated 15 March 2006, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Panama.

The Government of Panama hereby requests a waiver of its obligations under Article II of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 (GATT 1994) and General Council Decision WT/L/620 of 27 July 2005 in order to implement the Harmonized System 1996 (HS96) nomenclature and adopt the changes that this entails for Panama's Schedule CXLI.

Attached to this request are the following documents for consideration by the Committee on Market Access:

- Draft waiver decision in which it is agreed to suspend the application by Panama of the provisions of Article II of the GATT 1994 for the purpose of introducing the HS96 changes into Panama's Schedule of Concessions¹;
- factual information concerning the request for a waiver for the purpose of introducing the HS96 changes into Panama's Schedule of Concessions.

¹ G/C/W/546.

Factual Information Concerning the Request for a Waiver for the Purpose of Introducing the HS96 Changes into Panama's Schedule of Concessions

1. Date of original waiver

24 April 1998

2. Date of submission of documents relevant to the HS96 implementation

21 February 2002

Furthermore, on 6 February 2004, Panama sent the delegation of the United States of America copies of its foreign trade statistics for 2002, as requested by this delegation.

3. Number of extensions and dates granted

Panama has been granted ten extensions, the dates of which are as follows:

WT/L/281 - 14 October 1998

WT/L/303 - 15 June 1999

WT/L/338 - 4 November 1999

WT/L/351 - 3 May 2000

WT/L/379 - 8 December 2000

WT/L/400 - 8 May 2001

WT/L/458 - 13 May 2002

WT/L/524 - 24 July 2003

WT/L/570 - 17 May 2004

WT/L/620 - 27 July 2005

4. Number of countries with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been initiated

None.

(a) Canada – Further to clarification of and corrections to the documents submitted by Panama to the Secretariat, on 9 September 2002 Canada gave formal notice that it had withdrawn its reservation.

(b) Australia – Further to clarification of and corrections to the documents submitted by Panama to the Secretariat, on 23 August 2003 Australia gave formal notice that it had withdrawn its reservation.

(c) European Communities and United States – These two delegations are still verifying the documents provided by Panama, circulated in documents G/SECRET/HS96/48 of 4 April 2001, G/SECRET/HS96/48/Add.1 and Rev.1 of 18 March 2002 and 4 June 2002 respectively, and G/SECRET/HS96/48/Rev.1/Corr.2 of 14 August 2003.

5. Outlook for concluding the process

Panama is currently waiting for these two delegations to confirm acceptance of the documents submitted to the Secretariat in order to formally conclude implementation of HS96 nomenclature changes.

In the light of the above considerations and taking into consideration the fact that Panama will have to conclude these consultations or possibly conduct negotiations under Article XXVIII, particularly in view of the general reservations made by other Members, we expect that a period of 12 months as from the date of the waiver decision will be needed to complete the implementation of these amendments.
