

AGREEMENT ON IMPORT LICENSING PROCEDURES

NOTIFICATION UNDER ARTICLES 1.4(a) AND 8.2(b)

UGANDA

The following communication has been received from the Permanent Mission of Uganda.

External trade in Uganda, i.e. import and export trade, is regulated by the External Trade Act (1964)¹ whose administration and execution is the responsibility of the Minister for Trade. The administrative arrangements of this Act reflect the general situation and have always demanded that whoever engages in import or export trade has to obtain documentary consent from a body or department designated by the Minister responsible for trade to issue such a "licence". Currently the rules and all information concerning procedures for the submission of applications are spelt out in the Exporters' and Importers' Guide¹, having instituted an Import Certification System in November 1991.

Under the current Import Certification System, a holder of the certificate can import any goods not on the short negative list of imports. Import controls as a means of protection have been dismantled in favour of tariff arrangements. The system is open and a certificate can be obtained within a working day - less than 12 hours. (The report prepared for the first Trade Policy Review of Uganda² provides more information on this.) The certificate is valid for a period of six months and automatically renewable.

The contact point for information is the Directorate of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Plot No. 6/8 Parliamentary Avenue, P.O. Box 7103, Kampala. The administrative body for submission of applications is the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Plot No. 6/8 Parliamentary Avenue, P.O. Box 7103, Kampala.

Both automatic and non-automatic import licensing procedures are applied in Uganda. In both cases, the applicant is charged a token administrative fee to cover the cost of stationery. In case of automatic import certification procedures, the administrative purpose is mainly for registration of importers and exporters, data collection and handling of trade enquiries. The non-automatic procedures are there to cater for the negative list. The administrative purpose is mainly to apply safeguard measures but not a trade restriction.

The procedures are reviewed administratively from time to time. It is difficult to ascertain whether and when they can be eliminated completely. It can however be noted here that the current procedure is more transparent.

¹Available for consultation in the Secretariat (Market Access Division) (English only).

²WT/TPR/S/4 dated 30 June 1995.