

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Committee on Customs Valuation

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NOTIFICATION UNDER PARAGRAPH 1 OF ANNEX III TO THE AGREEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE VII OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE 1994

SENEGAL

The following communication, dated 17 May 2001, has been received from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Senegal.

Pursuant to the decision (G/VAL/39) of the Committee on Customs Valuation granting Senegal an extension of the delay in applying the WTO Customs Valuation Agreement, our country is under the obligation to report on the status of implementation of the work programme aimed at preparing for application of the Agreement.

I consequently have pleasure in enclosing the report drawn up by the Senegalese authorities on preparations for the entry into force of the Agreement on the prescribed date.

REPORT ON FULFILMENT OF THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR AND THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTO CUSTOMS VALUATION AGREEMENT

Senegal ratified the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization with a reservation allowing it to defer application of the Customs Valuation Agreement for a period of five years. The country should accordingly have begun implementing the Agreement on 1 January 2000.

An extension, however, of the delay in application was granted for a further period of 18 months, on the basis of an implementation programme approved by the WTO. The programme comprises five main lines of action, the degree of completion of each activity providing an indication of progress achieved.

1. Strategy

The Committee on Implementation has been given fresh impetus and officially started work in January 2001. Implementation programme activities are being carried out by its various components.

2. Structural issues

The future application of the Customs Valuation Agreement was already taken into account in the reorganization of the Directorate-General of Customs that took place in August 2000. Analysis of the Directorate's new structure shows that no further reforms are necessary to deal with the various aspects of application. At most, functional links between clearance and post-clearance control services need to be rendered smoother in order to ensure more effective enforcement.

Electronic processing of customs clearance is currently being updated and the task should be completed by June 2001. The new version of the system includes the functions needed to run applications for handling valuation issues and, in particular, to enhance circulation of information between the above-mentioned services. In this connection, it is planned to set up a value database with links through EDI to the clearance application.

The Import Verification Programme, which includes pre-shipment inspection procedures, has been reviewed. A new invitation to tender has been issued and bids are currently being processed. The verification programme will henceforth be conducted in conformity with the WTO rules and will consist mainly in helping Customs Administration ensure a harmonious transition from the Brussels Definition of Value to that of the WTO. The primary focus will be on assistance in targeting and risk management in the context of inspections.

3. Legislative and regulatory issues

The bill amending the Customs Code is now ready and will be submitted to the new National Assembly (the former having been dissolved) that will emerge from the April 2001 elections and is due to meet during the month of May. The bill incorporates the provisions of the Customs Valuation Agreement in domestic legislation. It also includes implementing provisions that are currently being finalized and are to be signed once the bill providing for their establishment has been adopted. The bill and implementing legislation span all the fields covered by the Agreement, in particular the right of appeal, the guarantee pertaining to removal pending final valuation and the organization of matters pertaining to relations with users.

4. Training

Following an assessment of needs and the target population, training began on 19 March and is due to continue until mid-June. It will involve all medium-level and senior Customs Administration officials and trade operators (importers, customs brokers, etc.).

The World Customs Organization has been requested to provide technical assistance in matters involving specialized training (post-clearance control). The WTO and other countries will be asked to supply additional funding for training activities.

5. Communication

A media campaign is scheduled for the months of May and June, but customs officials and trade operators are being informed ahead of time.

Everything considered, implementation is well under way. Efforts nevertheless need to be maintained and stepped up in order to ensure that all is ready before the prescribed deadline, to allow time for simulations and any fine-tuning that may prove necessary.

With the above objective in mind, the following programme timetable has been adopted:

- End March 2001: finalization of basic legislation;
 - end April 2001: finalization of texts pertaining to procedure;
 - June 2001: tests and simulation to be conducted on a pilot site, i.e. the Léopold Sédar Senghor Airport customs office.
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