



Committee on Import Licensing

**REPORT (2020) OF THE COMMITTEE ON IMPORT LICENSING
TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS**

1. The Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures (hereinafter "the Agreement") which entered into force on 1 January 1995, establishes disciplines on users of import licensing systems with the principal objective of ensuring that the procedures applied for granting import licences do not in themselves restrict trade. It aims to simplify, clarify and minimize the administrative requirements necessary to obtain import licences.
2. The Committee on Import Licensing was established to afford Members the opportunity of consulting on any matter relating to the operation of the Agreement or the furtherance of its objectives. The Committee's Rules of Procedure, which were approved by the Council for Trade in Goods, are contained in document G/L/147.
3. All Members of the WTO are *ipso facto* members of the Committee. Observer governments in the General Council of the WTO have Observer status in the Committee. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and UNCTAD have regular observer status in the Committee.
4. The focus of this report is on the period since the Committee's last annual report (G/L/1328), namely 5 October 2019 – 9 October 2020 (hereinafter "the reporting period"). In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions of in-person activities, the Committee held only one formal meeting, on 9 October 2020 (G/LIC/M/51, to be issued). One informal meeting, on 29 January 2020, and one informal virtual meeting, on 5 June 2020, were held under the chairpersonship of Ms Carol Tsang (Hong Kong, China). On 30 July 2020, through written procedures, the Committee elected Dr Muhammad Irfan (Pakistan) by acclamation as Chairperson of the Committee for 2020.¹ Pursuant to the Committee's Rules of Procedure, the officers shall hold office until the end of the first meeting of the following year.
5. Pursuant to Articles 1.4(a) and/or 8.2(b) of the Agreement and procedures agreed by the Committee, all Members are required to notify their laws, regulations, and administrative procedures relevant to import licensing and to submit copies of any relevant publications or laws and regulations upon becoming a WTO Member. Any subsequent changes to these laws, regulations, and administrative procedures are also required to be published and notified. Pursuant to subparagraphs 1-4 of Article 5, Members are also required to notify the institution of new import licensing procedures or changes in these procedures to the Committee within 60 days of publication. To streamline notification procedures, a notification form, circulated in document G/LIC/28, was adopted by the Committee (at its formal meeting on 4 April 2019) to be used by Members on a voluntary basis for notifications under Article 5.1-5.4, Article 1.4(a), and Article 8.2(b) of the Agreement. These notifications can be found in document series G/LIC/N/2/-.
6. During the reporting period, the Committee reviewed 210 notifications under these three provisions (Annex I) from the following 18 Members: Argentina; Costa Rica; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Republic of Korea; Macao, China; Morocco; Myanmar; Philippines; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Seychelles; Singapore; Switzerland-Liechtenstein; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; Ukraine; and Viet Nam.²
7. Article 5.5 of the Agreement allows Members to submit reverse notifications, where a Member considers that another Member has not notified the institution of a licensing procedure or changes

¹ Mrs. Stephania Aquilina (Malta) was elected Vice-Chairperson of the Committee by acclamation on 9 October 2020.

² New notifications were received from the Republic of Korea after the agenda for the October 9 meeting had closed. These notifications will be circulated shortly and will be reviewed at the Committee's next meeting.

in the procedures. However, no such reverse notifications have been received within the reporting period.

8. Article 7.3 of the Agreement requires all Members to provide replies to the Questionnaire on Import Licensing Procedures³ by 30 September each year. During the reporting period, the Committee reviewed 39 notifications (Annex II) from the following 34 Members: Albania; Kingdom of Bahrain; Cameroon; Canada; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; El Salvador; European Union; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Kazakhstan; Republic of Korea; Macao, China; Malaysia; Mauritius; Montenegro; New Zealand; Panama; Philippines; the Russian Federation; Seychelles; Singapore; South Africa; Switzerland-Liechtenstein; Chinese Taipei; Turkey; Ukraine; United States; and Uruguay.⁴ These notifications can be found in document series G/LIC/N/3/-.

9. The Committee has provided a regular forum for exchanging views on notifications submitted by Members. Written comments and questions concerning notifications submitted to the Committee and/or on import licensing procedures maintained by Members, and replies thereto, may be found in the document series G/LIC/Q/-. During the review period, the United States posed questions to the Dominican Republic (G/LIC/Q/DOM/2); Egypt (G/LIC/Q/EGY/3); Argentina (G/LIC/Q/ARG/18) and Kenya (G/LIC/Q/KEN/1). Japan posed questions to Indonesia (G/LIC/Q/IDN/41). The following Members provided written responses to comments and questions: Brazil to the European Union (G/LIC/Q/BRA/25); Egypt to the European Union (G/LIC/Q/EGY/2); Kenya to the United States (G/LIC/Q/KEN/2) and Myanmar to the United States (G/LIC/Q/MMR/2). At the Committee's meeting, Members exchanged views on the issues raised.

10. In addition, the following Members requested to include in the agenda specific issues regarding other Members' import licensing regimes and measures. At the Committee meeting held on 9 October 2020, the European Union made an oral statement on Brazil's importation of nitrocellulose; on Egypt's import licensing requirements for certain agricultural and processed products; on India's importation of pneumatic tyres; on Indonesia's import licensing regime for certain textile products; and on Thailand's importation of feed wheat. The United States made oral statements on China's changes to import licensing for certain recoverable materials; on India's import licensing requirement for boric acid and on Indonesia's import licensing regime for cellphones, handheld computers, and tablets. Canada and Australia made statements on India's quantitative restrictions on certain pulses. Members whose licensing measures had been questioned responded at the meeting and other interested Members also made comments.

11. At the informal meeting held on 29 January 2020, the Chairperson, based on her consultations with Members, outlined a number of factors which had led to the low compliance rate of notifications under Article 7.3 (the Reply to the Annual Questionnaire), namely, a lack of understanding of the Questionnaire, difficulties in coordinating among government agencies, and notification work not being given priority in Capitals. She urged Members to seek feasible solutions to improve the situation. The Secretariat made a presentation on notification obligations under Article 7.3 to Members. In addition, Members exchanged views on a number of operational issues concerning the Committee, including a schedule of meetings, an annotated agenda, a contact list of delegates and greater Member engagement at Committee meetings.

12. At the informal meeting held virtually on 5 June 2020, the Chairperson proposed the use of written procedures to review pending notifications and those Members that took the floor indicated that they were open to considering this proposal. The Chairperson also sought Members' views on holding an in-person formal meeting of the Committee in July. Some Members expressed reservations and the Chair subsequently postponed the Committee's next formal meeting to the autumn.

13. At the Committee's formal meeting held on 9 October 2020, the Committee officially launched the new import licensing website (<https://importlicensing.wto.org>).

³ Annexed to document G/LIC/3.

⁴ New notifications under Article 7.3 were received from Costa Rica; Honduras; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Kazakhstan; Republic of Korea; Japan; Thailand and the United States, after the agenda for the October 9 meeting had closed. These notifications will be circulated shortly and will be reviewed at the Committee's next meeting.

14. On technical assistance, between October 2019 and February 2020, the Secretariat organized a workshop on import licensing and notifications in Macao, China; provided technical assistance training sessions on import licensing issues in the Advanced Trade Policy Course (ATPC) in Geneva; in the Regional Trade Policy Course (RTPC) for French-speaking Africa, and in the National Workshop on WTO Notification Requirements held in Zimbabwe. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no on-the-ground technical assistance activities were held after March 2020. Nevertheless, online presentations on import licensing were delivered in September 2020 to Caribbean country officials during a virtual RTPC for the region and to East Timor in the context of its accession to the WTO.

**ANNEX I: NOTIFICATIONS REVIEWED DURING THE REPORT PERIOD PURSUANT TO
ARTICLE 1.4(A) AND/OR 8.2(B), ARTICLE 5.1-5.4 OF THE AGREEMENT¹
FROM 5 OCTOBER 2019 TO 9 OCTOBER 2020**

MEMBER	DOCUMENT	DATE OF ISSUANCE OF THE DOCUMENT
ARGENTINA	G/LIC/N/2/ARG/28/Add.5	05.03.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/ARG/28/Add.6	14.04.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/ARG/28/Add.7	29.07.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/ARG/28/Add.7/Corr.1	19.08.2020
COSTA RICA	G/LIC/N/2/CRI/4-24	05.02.2020
HONG KONG, CHINA	G/LIC/N/2/HKG/14	25.02.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/HKG/15	26.05.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/HKG/15/Corr.1	02.06.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/HKG/16	28.08.2020
INDONESIA	G/LIC/N/2/IDN/43-44	18.10.2019
KOREA, REPUBLIC OF	G/LIC/N/2/KOR/3-6	11.11.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/KOR/7-19	12.11.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/KOR/20-23	13.11.2019
MACAO, CHINA	G/LIC/N/2/MAC/1	24.06.2020
MOROCCO	G/LIC/N/2/MAR/5	26.02.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/MAR/5/Corr.1	06.03.2020
MYANMAR	G/LIC/N/2/MMR/2	16.09.2020
PHILIPPINES	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/3-18	10.03.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/19-22	11.03.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/23-32	12.03.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/33-37	26.03.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/38-39	27.03.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/40-41	31.03.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/42-47	01.04.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/48-52	02.04.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/53-65	09.04.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/66-72	20.04.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/73	23.04.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/74-83	24.04.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/84-94	29.04.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/95-105	06.05.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/106-115	18.05.2020
	G/LIC/N/2/PHL/116-118	28.07.2020
G/LIC/N/2/PHL/119-139	24.08.2020	
SAUDI ARABIA, KINGDOM OF	G/LIC/N/2/SAU/2	11.02.2020
SEYCHELLES	G/LIC/N/2/SYC/1	24.06.2020
SINGAPORE	G/LIC/N/2/SGP/7	30.04.2020
SWITZERLAND-LIECHTENSTEIN ²	G/LIC/N/2/CHE/4-6	01.10.2019
CHINESE TAIPEI	G/LIC/N/TPKM/8-13	14.10.2019
	G/LIC/N/2/TPKM/13/Rev.1	08.04.2020
THAILAND	G/LIC/N/2/THA/5	04.06.2020
UKRAINE	G/LIC/N/2/UKR/9	05.02.2020
VIET NAM	G/LIC/N/2/VNM/3-18	16.12.2019

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² Notifications from Switzerland-Liechtenstein (G/LIC/N/2/CHE/4-6) had been circulated before the reporting period; however, they were reviewed at the Committee's meeting of 9 October 2020.

**ANNEX II: NOTIFICATIONS REVIEWED DURING THE REPORT PERIOD
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 7.3 OF THE AGREEMENT¹
FROM 5 OCTOBER 2019 TO 9 OCTOBER 2020**

MEMBER	DOCUMENT (YEAR NOTIFIED FOR)	DATE OF ISSUANCE OF THE DOCUMENT
ALBANIA	G/LIC/N/3/ALB/8	2019
	G/LIC/N/3/ALB/9	2020
BAHRAIN, KINGDOM OF	G/LIC/N/3/BHR/3	2019
CAMEROON	G/LIC/N/3/CMR/8	2018-2019
CANADA	G/LIC/N/3/CAN/19	2019
CHINA	G/LIC/N/3/CHN/16	2017
	G/LIC/N/3/CHN/17	2018
	G/LIC/N/3/CHN/18	2019
	G/LIC/N/3/CHN/18/Corr.1	
COLOMBIA	G/LIC/N/3/COL/13	2019
COSTA RICA	G/LIC/N/3/CRI/16	2019
CUBA	G/LIC/N/3/CUB/10	2019
EL SALVADOR	G/LIC/N/3/SLV/4	2019
EUROPEAN UNION	G/LIC/N/3/EU/9	2020
HONG KONG, CHINA	G/LIC/N/3/HKG/23	2019
INDIA	G/LIC/N/3/IND/19	2019
INDONESIA	G/LIC/N/3/IDN/11	2019
JAPAN	G/LIC/N/3/JPN/18	2019
KAZAKHSTAN	G/LIC/N/3/KAZ/4	2019
KOREA, REPUBLIC OF	G/LIC/N/3/KOR/12	2019
MACAO, CHINA	G/LIC/N/3/MAC/22/Corr.1G/LI	
	C/N/3/MAC/23	2020
MALAYSIA	G/LIC/N/3/MYS/14	2018-2019
	G/LIC/N/3/MYS/14/Corr.1	
MAURITIUS	G/LIC/N/3/MUS/9	2019
	G/LIC/N/3/MUS/10	2020
MONTENEGRO	G/LIC/N/3/MNE/4	2020
NEW ZEALAND	G/LIC/N/3/NZL/6	2019
PANAMA	G/LIC/N/3/PAN/11	2020
PHILIPPINES	G/LIC/N/3/PHL/13	2020
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	G/LIC/N/3/RUS/5	2019
SEYCHELLES	G/LIC/N/3/SYC/3	2020
SINGAPORE	G/LIC/N/3/SGP/15	2019
SOUTH AFRICA	G/LIC/N/3/ZAF/8	2019
SWITZERLAND- LIECHTENSTEIN	G/LIC/N/3/CHE/15	2019
	G/LIC/N/3/CHE/16	2020
CHINESE TAIPEI	G/LIC/N/3/TPKM/10	2019
TURKEY	G/LIC/N/3/TUR/16	2019
UKRAINE	G/LIC/N/3/UKR/12	2019
UNITED STATES	G/LIC/N/3/USA/16	2019
URUGUAY	G/LIC/N/3/URY/13	2019
	G/LIC/N/3/URY/14	2020

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