



Committee on Import Licensing

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2020

CHAIRPERSON: DR MUHAMMAD IRFAN (PAKISTAN)

The Committee on Import Licensing held its fifty-second meeting on 9 October 2020 under the chairpersonship of Dr Muhammad Irfan (Pakistan). The agenda proposed for the meeting was circulated in document WTO/AIR/LIC/11.

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1.1. The Chairperson opened the meeting by observing that, due to COVID-19 travel and meeting restrictions, this was the first time that the Committee on Import Licensing had met formally since October 2019. He thanked Members for appointing him as Chairperson. He also thanked his predecessor, Ms Carol Tsang for her much appreciated and valued work for the Committee.

1.2. Ms Carol Tsang (Hong Kong, China) congratulated the Chairperson on his appointment. She noted that it had been an unusual year, considering that Members could not meet in person for several months, and the Committee had been unable to hold its spring meeting. However, the work of the Committee had not come to a halt during the lockdown period, thanks to the efforts of the Secretariat, who had worked hard to facilitate discussions among Members, while many notifications were also circulated. In this regard, she was grateful for the guidance and hard work of the Secretariat, as well as for the support of the Committee's Vice-Chairperson. She noted that, under the pandemic, one could clearly appreciate the importance of the rules-based system, and that all committees had continued to operate effectively. She recalled that, in 2019, the Committee had begun discussions on the challenges faced in completing the annual questionnaire, and on possible ways to facilitate this task for Members. She thanked all Members for their active engagement in the work of the Committee and for sharing their experiences. She hoped that Members could build on this effort and continue to enhance transparency on import licensing procedures in a meaningful way.¹

1.3. Moving on to the adoption of the agenda, the Chairperson recalled that the proposed agenda for this meeting was contained in Airgram WTO/AIR/LIC/11. He stated that, under agenda item "Other Business", he wished to say a few words regarding staff changes in connection with the Committee. He then asked if any delegation wished to add any other item for discussion under "Other Business".

1.4. The representative of the European Union indicated that, under agenda item "Other Business", the European Union wished to include an item on the importation of alcoholic beverages into Indonesia.

1.5. The agenda was adopted with the changes proposed.

1.6. The Chairperson recalled that delegates could attend this meeting either in person or virtually. He noted that, while providing convenience for participants, meetings held in this way could encounter unexpected technical problems, and that delegations' understanding and patience would be much appreciated in this regard. He explained that, in order to ensure that the meeting ran smoothly, once the floor had been opened, he would alternate between offering the floor to delegates

¹ Several delegations intervened during the meeting to congratulate the Chairperson on his appointment and thank his predecessor for her good work during her tenure.

in the room and those attending remotely. He assured delegations that such a procedural and purely technical arrangement was without prejudice to Members' rights.

1 LAUNCH OF THE IMPORT LICENSING WEBSITE

1.1. The Chairperson invited Deputy Director-General Yi to make a few remarks on the launch of the new WTO Import Licensing website and database.

1.2. Deputy Director-General Yi observed that the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures, which was established during the Tokyo Round, was one of the oldest GATT/WTO Agreements. As one of the most-frequently-used trade policy instruments, applied by almost all governments, use of import licensing had extended from enforcing quantitative restrictions and collecting trade statistics, to safeguarding product quality, the environment, consumer welfare, public health, and national security. Detailed procedural requirements under various provisions of the Agreement added further complexity to any search for information in this particular area. And he recalled that the idea of creating a database on import licensing dated back to 2017.

1.3. The objectives of the website were several: first, to create a database which stored and presented import licensing information in a systematic and structured way; second, to make better use of information contained in notifications; and third, to make it easy for Members and the business community to find the right information. During the past four years, the staff in the Market Access Division had designed the structure of the new website; they had reviewed and analysed all import licensing notifications submitted by Members since 1995; they had uploaded the Member profiles of 134 WTO Members; and they had verified over 2,500 pieces of legislation to ensure that their website links were functioning as they should, and that the legal texts were in place as well as 1,085 products and procedures to ensure accuracy. In this process, colleagues from the Information Technology Solutions Division (ITSD) provided indispensable technical support. Thanks to the work of the staff involved, the objectives of this project had been achieved and the import licensing database was ready to be launched.

1.4. He added that transparency made trade more inclusive and predictable. Enhanced efficiency, achieved through easy access to information, reduced trade costs for both exporters and importers. The new WTO import licensing database would significantly improve transparency in this important field and would benefit all Members, especially those developing Members that had capacity and resource constraints, as well as SMEs and MSMEs.

1.5. In concluding, he thanked Suja Rishikesh Mavroidis, Xiaodong Wang, Donna Wood, Irina Tarasenko, Karine Grange, and Steve Tanner for their excellent work, as well as all those colleagues in the Secretariat who had contributed to this project at different stages. He also thanked all Members, especially former Chairpersons of the Committee on Import Licensing, for their devotion, support, and valuable contributions over the past few years. Finally, he encouraged Members to work together to make this database a product which was responsive to their needs. In that respect, he encouraged Members to use this database frequently and submit notifications regularly, considering that the database had been established for their benefit and that its value would be enhanced by Members' use. With these words he announced the launch of the Import Licensing website (<https://importlicensing.wto.org>).

1.6. The representative of Hong Kong, China welcomed the launch of the new website, which was a convenient tool for accessing information on the import licensing procedures of WTO Members. She added that the launch of the website was timely given the need to facilitate trade during the current pandemic. And she encouraged all Members to provide their import licensing information in order to enhance transparency in international trade. She joined Deputy Director-General Yi in congratulating the Secretariat and thanking them for this remarkable work.

1.7. The representative of the United States thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in creating the import licensing website, which the United States considered to be a positive step. She encouraged all Members, through the Committee, continuously to update the website, and to do so in a transparent manner in order to ensure that the information it contained remained valid.

1.8. The representative of the European Union thanked Deputy Director-General Yi and the Secretariat for their efforts in launching this website dedicated to the work of the Committee. She

hoped that the website would help Members to find the necessary information in one single place and looked forward to it being updated on a regular basis.

1.9. The representative of Chinese Taipei was glad to see the launch of the import licensing website and joined Deputy Director-General Yi in thanking the Secretariat for their efforts in establishing it.

1.10. The representative of Canada congratulated the Secretariat for its hard work and previous Chairpersons for pursuing this initiative regarding an import licensing website. She hoped that this website would increase transparency and create a one-stop shop for import licensing notifications in the WTO. She also agreed with the European Union and the United States that notifications from Members would need to be updated regularly in order for the website to contain the most recent and accurate information possible.

1.11. The representative of China welcomed the launch of the new import licensing website and congratulated the Secretariat for its efforts in developing it. He believed that the new website would contribute to improvements in transparency and to the work of the Committee as well as facilitating Members' work, especially developing country Members that faced capacity constraints.

1.12. The representative of Australia welcomed the launch of the very valuable new website and congratulated the Secretariat for its hard work. Like Canada, he considered it important to have a one-stop shop for Members and interested parties wishing to access information on import licensing procedures. This was a simple and real-world example of how Members could tangibly improve transparency, thereby assisting and helping exporters and traders.

1.13. The representative of Colombia welcomed the launch of the import licensing website, which should prove useful to governments and business. She thanked the Secretariat for its work in developing and implementing this website and joined those Members that had spoken of the importance of transparency and of keeping the website updated based on the submission of notifications.

1.14. The representative of Switzerland welcomed the launch of the website, which would greatly facilitate access to the information contained in notifications and thus respond to an important need among trade actors. She also thanked the former Chairpersons of the Committee and the Secretariat for their hard work and efforts in developing and implementing the website.

1.15. The Committee took note of the statements made.

2 MEMBERS' COMPLIANCE WITH NOTIFICATION OBLIGATIONS – DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

2.1. The Chairperson stated that he had been informed by the Secretariat that, to date, a total of 247 notifications had been received under various provisions of the Import Licensing Agreement since the last meeting, 244 of which were listed in the Airgram for consideration at this meeting. New N/3 notifications had been received by the Secretariat before the meeting from Costa Rica; Honduras; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Kazakhstan; Thailand; and the United States. Given that they had arrived after the Airgram had already been issued, these documents would be reviewed at the Committee's next meeting.

2.2. The Chairperson highlighted that, as of the date of this meeting, 14 Members had not yet submitted any notification under any provision of the Agreement since joining the WTO. A total of 23 Members had not yet submitted any reply to the annual questionnaire under Article 7.3 of the Agreement, including the 14 Members that had not submitted any notifications at all. The lists of Members mentioned above had been reflected in the draft biennial report in document G/LIC/W/54. For the sake of transparency, he urged all Members on the list to submit their replies as soon as possible.

2.3. He also recalled that that submitting replies to the annual questionnaire under Article 7.3 of the Agreement was an annual notification obligation for all Members. As of 9 October 2020, only 15 Members had submitted their replies to the questionnaire for 2020. He thanked those Members that had respected the notification timeline and submitted N/3 notifications before 30 September 2020. He stated that transparency was one of the key pillars of the rules-based multilateral trading

system and encouraged Members that had not yet submitted their replies to the questionnaire for 2020 to do so as soon as possible. He added that, since the last Committee meeting, there had been some positive developments in the area of notifications. First, there had been a significant increase in notifications under Article 5.1-5.4, with over 200 new N/2 submissions received. Second, more Members had begun to use the new notification form contained in document G/LIC/28 to notify new import licensing regulations or changes therein. Third, some Members had notified several import licensing-related laws or regulations that had been in force for years but had not yet been notified. He thanked those Members for their efforts and dedication. He then asked delegations if they wished to comment on the issue of compliance with notification obligations.

2.4. The representative of the United States thanked those Members that had submitted notifications. She said that her delegation considered transparency to be a very important part of the work of this Organization, and appreciated Members' efforts in that regard.

2.5. The Committee took note of the Chairperson's report and of the statements made.

3 WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND REPLIES FROM MEMBERS ON SPECIFIC TRADE CONCERNS (G/LIC/W/51/REV.3)

3.1 Document G/LIC/Q/IDN/41

3.1. The representative of Japan stated Japan's serious concerns regarding the importation of rice from Japan into Indonesia, in respect of which Indonesia was not providing transparency, by failing to notify its measures, and by not indicating its intention to redress the negative effects of its measures on actual trade. He said that there had been some cases of importation of Japanese rice into Indonesia since the entry into force of the Indonesian "Regulation of the Minister of Trade No. 1 of 2018"; however, even in these relatively fortunate cases, Japan had been informed that, after application, it had taken approximately four months on average to obtain import licences, which seemed substantially longer than the necessary and proper period. But this was not the end of the story, since there had been no cases in which import licences had been issued after January 2020. The problem was ongoing, while the responsible ministry had confirmed that all necessary documents had been properly submitted and received. Another issue of concern was "unreasonable penalization". The validity of an import licence, when issued after several months of delay, was not longer than six months. This period could be shorter still and, if the quota under the licence was not filled, this failure to use the quota fully would be considered cause for possible penalization in subsequent applications, including rejection of the application or a reduced quota allocation. This happened in practice without any basis in the relevant "Regulation of the Minister of Trade No. 1 of 2018".

3.2. He remarked that healthy commercial actions could not occur under conditions of limited transparency and limited predictability. Japan was concerned that Indonesia's administration of its import licensing regime was neither transparent nor predictable. Therefore, Japan requested Indonesia to make its import licensing procedures transparent, promptly to provide solutions to the substantial delay in issuing import licences, and to address all other problems relating to the importation of Japanese rice. Moreover, Japan requested Indonesia to provide sufficient clarification of its procedures at the meeting itself, and in writing. To find a solution, Japan stood ready to engage in bilateral consultations if Indonesia so wished.

3.3. The representative of Indonesia responded to Japan's concerns regarding import licensing for Japonica rice. She said that, on the issue of notification, Indonesia was still coordinating among government agencies in preparing regulations to be notified to the WTO. She noted that all the information questioned by Japan was contained in the "Regulation of the Minister of Trade No. 1 of 2018", publicly available on Ministry of Trade website (<http://jdih.kemendag.go.id/peraturan>). Indonesia was open to discuss the aforementioned regulation bilaterally, should Japan need further explanation of the details of the requirements on import licensing, especially regarding Japonica rice importation.

3.4. Furthermore, Indonesia was not violating Article 3.5(f) of the Import Licensing Agreement, although the COVID-19 pandemic and the so-called "new normal", including work from home policies, were certainly having a serious impact on how government supported businesses, including in relation to release on import approvals. Regarding the import approvals for Japonica rice, she said

that Indonesia had already released three import approvals, dated 26 February , 11 March , and 26 June 2020, for imports originating from Japan, Viet Nam, Thailand, China, the United States, and India, for a total of 6,850 tonnes. Based on their data, import utilization relating to these three import approvals stood at approximately 1,393 tonnes, or 20.33%, all originating from Viet Nam. She further stated that Indonesia had never restricted the importation of Japonica rice, including that originating from Japan. Indonesia considered that the utilization of import approvals relating to Japonica rice was purely based on business-to-business decisions by the business entity/importer.

3.2 Document G/LIC/Q/DOM/2

3.5. The representative of the United States reminded the delegation of the Dominican Republic of the questions submitted by the United States during the review period. She expressed gratitude to the Dominican Republic for reviewing their questions and said that they would appreciate a response in writing as soon as possible.

3.6. The representative of Colombia thanked the United States for their written questions to the Dominican Republic. She expressed Colombia's interest in these issues and in the responses that the Dominican Republic would share with the Committee. She also said that her delegation had found that the compilation of questions and replies circulated by the Secretariat in document G/LIC/W/51/Rev.3 had been very useful; it facilitated Members' work.

3.7. The representative of the Dominican Republic offered his delegation's apologies to the United States for the delay in responding to their questions. He asked the United States to clarify what they meant in question 1 by "inspect and dispatch" and "authorization", as they were unsure of what the United States was referring to. He also said that the Dominican Republic was looking at the import licensing system with a view to facilitating trade, and that his authorities worked with a single window for foreign trade. This was a platform which accelerated requests. He considered that this response had addressed questions 1 and 2. Turning to question 3, he noted that one of the pillars of the Agreement on Agriculture was the elimination of quantitative restrictions on imports, and that the Ministry of Agriculture could not issue restrictions on quantities to the extent that they were bound by these multilateral agreements. Therefore, regarding question 4, he confirmed that hatching eggs and potatoes were included in the WTO Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ), in accordance with these commitments, and that permits were issued automatically. In respect of question 5, he confirmed that the United States had correctly understood it, and that they would submit their responses through the usual channels and through the Secretariat.

3.3 Documents G/LIC/Q/KEN/1 and G/LIC/Q/KEN/2

3.8. The representative of the United States thanked Kenya for their engagement during the review period. She said that they had received timely responses to their questions, and that their subject matter experts were closely examining these responses in Washington. She noted that they had additional questions, which they would submit to the Chairperson for circulation to Committee Members.

3.4 Document G/LIC/Q/EGY/3

3.9. The representative of the United States drew Members' attention to their written questions contained in document G/LIC/Q/EGY/3. She said that they had been pleased to learn that Egypt would circulate its responses in the near future. She had been informed that Egypt would soon notify various import licensing procedures to this Committee, which they assumed would also include its replies to the annual questionnaire (N3), which would be a welcome development. She had hoped that Egypt's forthcoming notifications would clarify Egypt's procedure for the importation of poultry products, including chicken offal and limbs. In the meantime, her delegation asked Egypt to clarify whether or not poultry products, including chicken offal and limbs, were subject to "prior approval", import licensing, or both.

3.10. She also asked Egypt to clarify the list of products suspended from importation and provide relevant information justifying the import suspension; to disclose to Members where it published relevant information concerning these products so that importers and exporters could be informed

of changes to procedures; and to detail when the importation of these products would be allowed to resume.

3.11. She added that the United States was seriously concerned over the role of the consultative import committees established through 2018 Prime Minister Decisions Nos. 2080, 2233, and 222. Her delegation requested transparency regarding the criteria used to issue import licences for beef, fish, and poultry products. She encouraged Egypt to submit its pending notifications in a manner that sufficiently described the applicable regulations and procedures, listing the products subject to import licensing, providing the eligibility to apply for an import licence, and describing the criteria considered when issuing an import licence. Finally, she said that the United States encouraged transparency on these measures and looked forward to Egypt's responses to their questions about regulation and procedures regarding its import licensing regime for agricultural products.

3.12. The representative of Egypt thanked the United States for the follow-up and additional questions raised in document G/LIC/Q/EGY/3. Egypt recognized that the fact that it had not submitted notifications under the Import Licensing Agreement had raised many legitimate questions among Members. He said that it had been his delegation's intention, prior to the COVID-19 crisis, to finalize the process of preparing these notifications and to present them to the Committee on Import Licensing; however, the ongoing crisis had delayed this process. Nevertheless, he assured the Committee that officials in Capital were currently coordinating efforts among different Egyptian authorities in order to finalize and submit the required notifications by the date of the Committee's next meeting. He also thanked the WTO Secretariat for the technical assistance it had provided to Egypt in this area.

3.13. He then turned to the preliminary answers received from Capital, noting that the more detailed written replies would be provided as soon as possible. He addressed first the United States' follow-up questions. In respect of the first question, prior to this meeting, Egypt had provided to the US delegation a list of the regulations governing the licensing procedures of different Egyptian authorities, and the products they covered. He added that this list would be included in the document with the written replies to be circulated to Members. Regarding the second question, he said that his delegation would notify, by the date of the Committee's next meeting, a brief description of the regulations governing the administration of licensing procedures, together with the required information stipulated in Article 4(a) and Article 5 of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures. In this regard, he noted that a number of recently established authorities had overtaken the functions of other entities and had adopted relevant measures that needed to be compiled in the notifications. Regarding the third and fourth questions, on the suspension of imports of products listed in Annex 1 of Decree No. 770/2005, he said that this list and its amendments had not changed since Egypt's last trade policy review in 2018. The importation of these products had been suspended for legitimate reasons, including health, safety, religious, environmental, and national security reasons. Hence, the list of products would only be revised in light of any changes in relation to the reasons for justifying the suspension.

3.14. Turning to the United States' additional questions, he stated that, in respect of poultry imports, prior approval requests were submitted to the General Organization of Veterinary Services (GOVS). The requests were then presented to a committee, established by Prime Minister's Decree No. 222/2018, regulating the imports of poultry and poultry products to ensure that such products did not lead to the introduction of diseases into the Egyptian territories, and that they met the required standards stipulated by the GOVS, including halal requirements. Approvals were granted based on meeting the set standards and requirements and the epidemic situation in the exporting country. Regarding Article 102 of Ministerial Decree No. 770/2005, he clarified that it concerned labelling requirements and not licensing requirements. He said that the officials in the Ministry of Trade were coordinating with the GOVS regarding the import trade statistics from countries where poultry facilities were located. However, the imports of chicken offal and limbs were currently suspended, according to Annex 1 of Ministerial Decree No. 770/2005. He added that any changes in this regard would be duly published.

3.5 Document G/LIC/Q/ARG/18

3.15. The representative of the United States expressed concern over the import licensing regime of Argentina following a period of sustained reports by United States industry detailing significant increases in non-tariff barriers (NTBs), including delays and new formalities for import licences. She directed Members' attention to their recently submitted questions under G/LIC/Q/ARG/18, in

response to a series of recent notifications made by Argentina under G/LIC/N/2/ARG/28. She asked Argentina to clarify some of these recent changes to its import licensing regime. She said that her delegation would also appreciate some basic statistical information for both automatic and non-automatic licences over the past three years.

3.16. The United States was interested in understanding Argentina's process for granting and refusing applications for import licences. Specifically, under what circumstances would Argentina refuse an application for a licence other than failing to meet the administrative criteria? She noted as an example that Argentina's recent notifications indicated the possibility of very broad information requests, on short notice, to applicants for non-automatic import licenses. Her delegation wished to better understand these information requests as well as any measures taken by Argentina to ensure that such information requests did not result in a trade restriction or in trade disruptive effects. Moreover, she asked Argentina to detail the basis on which the implementing authority made such information requests. For example, how did such requests relate to the measure being implemented through the licensing procedure? She thanked Argentina for receiving these questions and said that her delegation would have appreciated a response in writing as soon as possible.

3.17. The representative of Argentina thanked the United States for the questions, contained in document G/LIC/Q/ARG/18, about the most recent notifications from Argentina to the Committee. She informed the United States that their technical team was continuing to work on the responses, which would be provided shortly.

3.6 Document G/LIC/Q/BRA/25

3.18. The representative of Brazil said that the Brazilian Government was still working to provide definite answers to the European Union's questions. In the meantime, she reiterated that Brazil did not differentiate between industrial and military nitrocellulose, and that it was a characteristic of this product that, regardless of the nitrogen concentration, it might pose risks, as it was the basis for the production of ammunition, explosives, and other defence products. For this reason, Brazil understood that the adoption of regulations for controlling and monitoring trade in nitrocellulose was a legitimate instrument of protection.

3.19. The representative of the European Union thanked Brazil for its short explanation and said that her delegation would intervene on this issue under item 5 of the agenda, where they had a specific point regarding Brazil's nitrocellulose regime.

3.7 Document G/LIC/Q/EGY/2

3.20. The representative of Egypt thanked the European Union for its continued interest in Egypt's import system. He noted that, after having provided answers to the questions contained in document G/LIC/Q/EGY/2, they had received additional questions from the European Union. He understood that this discussion would take place under agenda item 6 and said that he would intervene under that item.

3.8 Document G/LIC/Q/MMR/2

3.21. The representative of Myanmar thanked the United States for its questions on import licensing procedures in Myanmar contained in document G/LIC/Q/MMR/1, and noted that Myanmar had provided its replies, in document G/LIC/Q/MMR/2, at the Committee's meeting of 4 October 2019. She added that Myanmar had no further comments at that stage and that, once she had received updates from Capital, she would communicate these to the United States via the Secretariat.

3.22. The representative of the United States thanked Myanmar for its engagement during the review period. She noted that her delegation had received timely responses to their questions and their subject matter experts in Washington were closely examining these. If there were any additional questions, the United States would submit these, via the Chairperson, for circulation to the Committee.

3.23. The Committee took note of the statements made.

4 NOTIFICATIONS

4.1 Notifications under Article 5.1-5.4, 1.4(a), and 8.2(b) of the Agreement

4.1. The Chairperson stated that over 200 N/2 notifications, submitted by 16 Members, had been listed for the Committee's consideration at this meeting. The large number of N/2 notifications could be explained in two ways. First, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel and meeting restrictions, the spring formal meeting of the Committee had been cancelled, which caused delays in reviewing some notifications. Second, since the Committee's last meeting, a few Members had made tremendous efforts to provide missing information using the new notification template. In this regard, he thanked those Members that had made efforts to improve the transparency of their respective import licensing regimes. Due to the large number of notifications on the agenda, and with a view to making the review process more efficient, he proposed to review the notifications in groups following a sequence by notifying Member.

4.2. The following notifications under Article 5.1-5.4 were reviewed by the Committee: Argentina (G/LIC/N/2/ARG/28/Add.5, G/LIC/N/2/ARG/28/Add.6, G/LIC/N/2/ARG/28/Add.7, and G/LIC/N/2/ARG/28/Add.7/Corr.1); Costa Rica (G/LIC/N/2/CRI/4-G/LIC/N/2/CRI/24); European Union (G/LIC/N/2/EU/13); Hong Kong, China (G/LIC/N/2/HKG/14, G/LIC/N/2/HKG/15, G/LIC/N/2/HKG/15/Corr.1, and G/LIC/N/2/HKG/16); Indonesia (G/LIC/N/2/IDN/43 and G/LIC/N/2/IDN/44); Republic of Korea (G/LIC/N/2/KOR/3-G/LIC/N/2/KOR/23); Macao, China (G/LIC/N/2/MAC/1); Morocco (G/LIC/N/2/MAR/5 and G/LIC/N/2/MAR/5/Corr.1); Myanmar (G/LIC/N/2/MMR/2); Philippines (G/LIC/N/2/PHL/3-G/LIC/N/2/PHL/139); Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (G/LIC/N/2/SAU/2); Seychelles (G/LIC/N/2/SYC/1); Singapore (G/LIC/N/2/SGP/7); Switzerland and Liechtenstein (G/LIC/N/2/CHE/4, G/LIC/N/2/CHE/5 and G/LIC/N/2/CHE/6); Chinese Taipei (G/LIC/N/2/TPKM/8-G/LIC/N/2/TPKM/13, and G/LIC/N/2/TPKM/13/Rev.1); Thailand (G/LIC/N/2/THA/5); Ukraine (G/LIC/N/2/UKR/9); and Viet Nam (G/LIC/N/2/VNM/3- G/LIC/N/2/VNM/18).

4.3. The representative of the United States thanked the Philippines for the numerous notifications of legislation and regulations concerning import licensing and for updating their annual questionnaire notification. She brought Members' attention to document G/LIC/N/3/PHL/13 and the process for issuing SPS Import Clearances (SPSIC). She said that her delegation planned to submit questions in the coming days. However, she noted a few inconsistencies between the information notified and the reports that they had received regarding this regime. For example, in document G/LIC/N/3/PHL/13, the Philippines had stated that the application for the SPSIC only needed to be made before importation. However, they had received reports that in many cases applications had to be received well before the product was loaded from its country of origin. Once the product was on the water, SPSIC applications no longer appeared to be accepted at all. They asked the Philippines to clarify this requirement. Furthermore, she said that they would also appreciate more information about the decision-making process used to issue SPSICs. For instance, document G/LIC/N/3/PHL/13 stated that SPSICs were not intended to restrict the quantity or value of imports, but rather were used to safeguard human and plant health and prevent the spread of pests or diseases. However, they had received reports from industry where the government had refused to issue SPSICs for an extended period without citing these safeguard issues as the primary justification. She concluded that her delegation looked forward to submitting these questions to the Philippines in the near future and asked the Philippines to provide timely written responses addressing their concerns.

4.4. The representative of the Philippines thanked the United States for their comments and said that they would appreciate receiving inputs in writing for consultations with their Capital.

4.5. The Committee took note of the notifications and of the statements made.

4.2 Notifications under Article 7.3 of the Agreement

4.6. The Chairperson noted that 36 notifications had been listed for consideration at this meeting. Some of the notifications had been notified for 2020 and others had been notified for 2019 or earlier years. A number of new N/3 notifications had been submitted after the Airgram had been issued and these would be reviewed at the Committee's subsequent meeting.

4.7. The following notifications under Article 7.3 were reviewed by the Committee: Albania (G/LIC/N/3/ALB/8 and G/LIC/N/3/ALB/9); Kingdom of Bahrain (G/LIC/N/3/BHR/3); Cameroon (G/LIC/N/3/CMR/8); Canada (G/LIC/N/3/CAN/19); China (G/LIC/N/3/CHN/16, G/LIC/N/3/CHN/17, G/LIC/N/3/CHN/18 and G/LIC/N/3/CHN/18/Corr.1); Colombia (G/LIC/N/3/COL/13); Costa Rica (G/LIC/N/3/CRI/16); Cuba (G/LIC/N/3/CUB/10); El Salvador (G/LIC/N/3/SLV/4); European Union (G/LIC/N/3/EU/9); Hong Kong, China (G/LIC/N/3/HKG/23); India (G/LIC/N/3/IND/19); Indonesia (G/LIC/N/3/IDN/11); Japan (G/LIC/N/3/JPN/18); Kazakhstan (G/LIC/N/3/KAZ/4); Republic of Korea (G/LIC/N/3/KOR/12); Macao, China (G/LIC/N/3/MAC/23 and G/LIC/N/3/MAC/22/Corr.1); Malaysia (G/LIC/N/3/MYS/14 and G/LIC/N/3/MYS/14/Corr.1); Mauritius (G/LIC/N/3/MUS/9 and G/LIC/N/3/MUS/10); Montenegro (G/LIC/N/3/MNE/4 and G/LIC/N/3/MNE/4/Corr.1); New Zealand (G/LIC/N/3/NZL/6); Panama (G/LIC/N/3/PAN/11); Philippines (G/LIC/N/3/PHL/13); Russian Federation (G/LIC/N/3/RUS/5); Seychelles (G/LIC/N/3/SYC/3); Singapore (G/LIC/N/3/SGP/15); South Africa (G/LIC/N/3/ZAF/8); Switzerland-Liechtenstein (G/LIC/N/3/CHE/15 and G/LIC/N/3/CHE/16); Chinese Taipei (G/LIC/N/3/TPKM/10); Turkey (G/LIC/N/3/TUR/16); Ukraine (G/LIC/N/3/UKR/12); United States (G/LIC/N/3/USA/16); and Uruguay (G/LIC/N/3/URY/13 and G/LIC/N/3/URY/14).

4.8. The Chairperson recalled that only 15 Members, out of a total WTO membership of over 130 (counting EU Member States as one), had submitted new Replies to the Annual Questionnaire for the year 2020 so far. He encouraged those Members that had not yet done so to update and submit their N3 notifications as soon as possible.

4.9. The Committee took note of the notifications.

5 BRAZIL – IMPORTATION OF NITROCELLULOSE FOR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES IN BRAZIL (EU FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS – STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION)

5.1. The representative of the European Union thanked Brazil for its answers in document G/LIC/Q/BRA/25, concerning the Brazilian regime for the importation of nitrocellulose. She said that the European Union wished to understand whether importers listed under Brazilian law were the only importers that could be authorized to import industrial nitrocellulose to Brazil. Furthermore, they were seeking clarification as to whether Brazilian law permitted the importation of industrial nitrocellulose by foreign companies, their representations, or their local buyers, in the course of an international commercial transaction with a private party in Brazil. She recalled that Brazil had responded that the relevant legislation was being reviewed and that they would provide the European Union with definitive answers once this process had been concluded. For this reason, they requested Brazil to provide an update on the current situation regarding Brazil's legislation on the importation of nitrocellulose.

5.2. The representative of Brazil thanked the European Union for their continued interest in this matter. Her delegation had taken note of the European Union's remarks, which would be transmitted to Capital, and Brazil hoped to provide a definitive answer as soon as possible.

5.3. The Committee took note of the statements made.

6 EGYPT – IMPORT LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN AGRICULTURAL AND PROCESSED PRODUCTS - STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

6.1. The representative of the European Union said that her delegation was concerned about certain measures recently implemented by Egypt and not notified to the WTO, namely a new decree on food import licensing, a ban on sugar imports, and quantitative restrictions on imports of meat and poultry. The new Decree No. 6/2006 on food import licensing provided that the National Food Safety Authority should take action on a licence request within 30 days; however, it did not stipulate what happened if the authority failed to do so. This might have led to significant delays, similar to those experienced in connection with Decree 43/2016 on the compulsory registration of exporters. Furthermore, the Decree mentioned the possibility for importers to be included on a White List but did not specify which objective conditions needed to be fulfilled for such inclusion, leading to a lack of transparency in this process. In addition, the Decree had entered into force one day after its publication, therefore not providing for an adequate transition period. And it only granted a six-month transition period for companies that already carried out importation services, while

allowing no possibility for companies that were in the process of planning such activities to adapt to the new measures, leading to legal and economic uncertainty.

6.2. Her delegation was also concerned about the possible double registration for food products falling under both Decree No. 6/2020 and Decree No. 43/2016. It appeared that exporters and importers of the very same food articles needed to be registered – exporters at the General Organization of Export and Import Control, and importers at the National Food Safety Authority – which created a substantial and unnecessary burden. Regarding import restrictions on meat and poultry, she noted that the system of import permits under Prime Minister's Decree No. 2080/2018 and Prime Minister's Decision No. 222/2018 was inconsistent with Article XI of the GATT (*de jure* and *de facto* import prohibition through quantitative restriction), as well as several provisions of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures. She added that the systems for granting import permits lacked full transparency, noting that the procedures of the relevant committees, and the calendars of their meetings, were not publicly shared. Rejections of import permits were communicated orally and without any possibility of appeal, and there were no rules stipulating under which conditions import permits were approved under each act.

6.3. Her delegation was asking Egypt to stop applying quantitative restrictions on imports of meat and poultry originating in the European Union, in compliance with WTO law and the EU-Egypt Association Agreement. She noted with concern the sugar ban/restrictions imposed by Egypt last June, followed by the ban's three-month extension, and invited Egypt to provide all relevant information justifying the import prohibitions applied to sugar under Decree No. 259/2020 and Decree No. 420/2020 extending the import restrictions in question. She recalled that the European Union had raised the issue with Egypt in the WTO Agriculture Committee in July 2020 but had not yet received a reply to its queries and concerns on the nature and motivation for such measure. She concluded that the European Union wished to be reassured regarding the date of termination of the measure and looked forward to receiving detailed written replies to its questions circulated in document G/LIC/Q/EGY/4.

6.4. The representative of the United States shared similar concerns to those of the European Union regarding Egypt's import licensing requirements for certain agricultural products. She asked Egypt to address these issues in a timely manner and to notify the Committee of all applicable regulations and procedures, listing the products subject to import licensing, providing the eligibility to apply for an import licence, and describing the criteria considered when issuing an import licence.

6.5. The representative of Egypt thanked the European Union and the United States for their statements and, in particular, the European Union for providing his delegation, prior to this meeting, the points that the EU had intended to raise under this agenda item. He took the opportunity to clarify certain points regarding recent decisions and decrees by the Egyptian authorities.

6.6. First, on Decision No. 6/2020 on the rules organizing imports of food issued by the board of directors of the National Food Safety Authority (NFSA), he said that the Decision stipulated that importers of food products should be registered in the registry of licensed food importers. Food importers should not import food products until they had obtained the licence. The Decision had yet to be notified to the WTO. It aimed at ensuring the safety of imported food products and reducing the risks associated with imported food. The Decision would also lead to improved clearance times of imported food by ensuring that foreign suppliers applied the necessary food safety measures and international best practices in this regard and were able to trace and recall their products. The Decision covered matters related to the following: the documents required to apply for licences to import food; the validity period of the licence; the commitments that food importers must abide by; the commitments undertaken by the NFSA in relation to food importers; the financial obligations falling on food importers; and the cases in which the licence was suspended or cancelled. In order to ensure transparency, the Decision had been published in the Official Journal on 16 July 2020. It had also been published on the website of the NFSA. The Decision provided a six-month transitional period for currently operating food importers to obtain the stipulated licence and to be registered with the authority in order to ensure the smooth flow of trade and to avoid any trade disruptions. New food importers would register with the NFSA after submitting the required documents, including proof of registration in the importers registry at the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

6.7. He noted that there was therefore no uncertainty in the process. If importers were in the process of registering at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, a copy of this registration application was a prerequisite in the registration process at the NFSA. The Decision also stipulated a timeline of

30 days in which the NFSA would inform the applicant of whether or not his documents had satisfied the relevant requirements. If the submitted documents fulfilled the requirements, the applicant would be registered in the registry of licensed importers, and this information would be published on the website. If the applicant did not meet the requirements, and if the food safety requirements were not satisfied, they would be informed of the reasons and corrective action would be required. Regarding the point raised on the interlinkage with Decree 43/2016, he noted that not all food products were included in Decree 43/2016, whereas Decision 6/2020 covered imports of all food products as defined in the Decree. Concerning the White List of importers, he stated that this would be established by the NFSA, which would duly issue the requirements for adding importers to this list.

6.8. Second, on Prime Minister's Decree No. 2080/2018 and Prime Minister's Decision No. 222/2018, he said that these decrees did not create quantitative import restrictions. These two decrees aimed at regulating the imports of live animals, meat and meat products and poultry to ensure that imports of such products did not lead to the introduction of diseases and that they met the required standards stipulated by the GOVS, including the halal requirements. As per these two decrees, a committee had been established to look into the requests for the prior approval to import. Approvals were given based on meeting the set standards and requirements and the epidemiological situation of the exporting country. The committee also kept track of the imported quantities for statistical purposes. The two decrees and their relevant administrative procedures would be part of the regulations to be notified to the Committee on Import Licensing.

6.9. Third, regarding Decree 259/2020 and Decree 420/2020 imposing and extending the import restrictions on white sugar and raw sugar (except for imports based on an import approval), he confirmed that this import restriction was temporary in nature and was regularly reviewed. The initial imposition had taken place on 19 May 2020 and was intended to remain in place for three months. The latest decree had extended the restriction for a further three months. This measure had been imposed in order to deal with the problem of the temporary surplus caused by the sharp 30% decline in sugar prices.

6.10. Fourth, on the issue raised concerning Decree 43/2016 and whether it limited the number of suppliers that could be registered under one trademark, he confirmed that Decree 43/2016 stipulated no such limits. He said that it would have been beneficial if the European Union could have shared with Egypt the specific cases. Decree 43/2016 clearly set out the requirements for trademark owner companies and placed no such restriction. The provision on the registration of companies owning the trademark had been added in order to ensure the flow of exports of those companies, because otherwise it would have been necessary to register each distribution centre, including manufacturing plants entitled to supply the products bearing their trademark.

6.11. The representative of the European Union thanked Egypt for its preliminary replies to their questions and said that her delegation would also appreciate receiving Egypt's replies in writing.

6.12. The Committee took note of the statements made.

7 INDIA – IMPORTATION OF PNEUMATIC TYRES - STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

7.1. The representative of the European Union noted that India had adopted, on 12 June 2020, Notification No. 12/2015-2020 on "Amendment in Import Policy of Tyres", whereby imports of pneumatic tyres for motor cars, buses, lorries, motor scooters and motorcycles had been moved from the "free" category to the "restricted" category. The change in category implied that tyres could only be imported pending the granting of a licence. To the knowledge of her delegation, the measure at issue had not been duly notified to the WTO Import Licensing Committee. Additionally, importers had received no guidelines on how to proceed to obtain licences. There was a need for full clarity on both the procedure and the scope of the guidelines. She said that the European Union was concerned about the effect of this measure on imports of tyres, which had come to a halt since June 2020, and she urged India to comply with the notification requirements as set out under Articles 1.4 and 5 of the Import Licensing Agreement. She said that, in this context, India should provide to importers the rules and all information concerning procedures and requirements for the submission of applications. India should also officially inform the WTO Import Licensing Committee about the recent changes to the administrative procedure applicable to the importation of tyres. In addition, India should reconsider any implicit or explicit quantitative or other (for example, end-user principle)

restrictions on the import of replacement tyres that could run contrary to WTO rules. In conclusion, the European Union wished to enquire about the reasons that had led India to introduce this new measure, which by nature was restrictive and discriminatory, favouring local tyre producers.

7.2. The representative of Chinese Taipei shared the concerns raised by the European Union. He appreciated that India had provided the website link to download the documents for the application process for the exports of pneumatic tyres to India. However, his delegation had recently been informed by their companies that they had been facing difficulties since June because Indian importers' applications for import licences from the Indian Government were still pending. He noted that the fact that India had not yet issued import licences for the aforesaid applications constituted a ban on tyre imports. He urged India to comply with the regulations as set out under the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures. He recalled that Members that institute licensing procedures or make changes to licensing procedures should notify the Committee within 60 days of their announcement. Furthermore, non-automatic licensing procedures should be implemented in a transparent and predictable manner and should not have any additional trade-restrictive or trade-distortive effects. He reiterated his delegation's concern over this matter and expressed the hope that India would carefully consider the impact of the measure and expedite the licence issuing process.

7.3. The representative of the United States supported the European Union's concerns regarding India's lack of notifications regarding its import procedures for tyres. She urged India to submit its notifications of the procedures for Notification No. 12/2015-2020 of 12 June 2020, and also to complete the annual questionnaire, in order for India to meet its transparency obligations under this Committee. In addition, she requested that India review and submit all pending applications in a timely manner.

7.4. The representative of the Republic of Korea thanked the European Union for raising this issue in a timely manner and echoed its concerns. He noted that India had introduced a new import policy on tyres in June 2020, with Notification No. 12/2015-2020, by changing the previous "free" policy to a new "restricted" policy. Thereafter, Korean companies had requested import licences on tyres, but the Indian Government had not replied to these requests and had not provided any explanation. He recalled that Article 3.2 of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures stipulated that "non-automatic licensing shall not have trade-restrictive or trade-distortive effects on imports additional to those caused by the imposition of the restriction". In addition, as stated in Article 3.5(f), the period for processing applications shall be "no longer than 60 days if all applications are considered simultaneously". Furthermore, the chapeau of the Agreement made clear that import licensing, particularly non-automatic import licensing, should be implemented in a transparent and predictable manner. Therefore, he concluded that it was clear that India needed to operate its import licensing policy on tyres in a transparent way, including by providing the relevant information on the process. Korea encouraged India to facilitate the import licensing process to prevent creating a barrier to free trade.

7.5. The representative of India thanked the delegations of the European Union, Chinese Taipei, the United States, and the Republic of Korea, for expressing their views on this matter. He stated that India had recently changed its import policy in respect of certain specific new pneumatic tyres and that they were in process of notifying these changes to the Committee. In this context, he stated that the implementation of licensing procedures by India was transparent and predictable. He noted that the application process for certain import licences was the same as for other import licences and that such licences were authorized for clearance every month by a facilitation committee. He added that the procedure for the issuance of such licences was provided under paragraph 2.50 and paragraph 2.51 of the Handbook of Procedures 2015-2020, which was available on the website of India's Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

7.6. The Committee took note of the statements made.

8 INDONESIA – IMPORT LICENSING REGIME FOR CERTAIN TEXTILES PRODUCTS - STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

8.1. The representative of the European Union stated that, following the entry into force of Regulation No. 77/2019, imports of European Union origin of finished textiles items, notably carpets, were no longer possible in Indonesia. No licences were being issued for these products if they did

not meet the requirements of the import licensing system, and only raw materials or supporting materials imported for further production processes could obtain licences. This had resulted in a prohibition to import finished textiles products, which was very concerning both for the product at issue and as a general precedent. She pointed out that, to that date, this measure had not been notified to the WTO Secretariat, which was inconsistent with WTO transparency obligations. In her delegation's view, this measure was inconsistent with Article XI of the GATT (*de jure* and *de facto* import prohibition through quantitative restriction), and Articles 1 and 5 of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures (disproportionately cumbersome import licensing procedures and requirements). The European Union also considered that Indonesia's import regime for textiles products and textiles (falling within the list in the Annex to Regulation No. 77/2019, if imported for purposes other than further processing by domestic producer importers, their cooperating production parties, and/or small- and mid-sized industries) was also against the spirit and the letter of several provisions of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Therefore, the European Union urged Indonesia to re-evaluate the measure at issue and to bring it into conformity with all applicable WTO rules and procedures.

8.2. She also noted that the import regime for textile products and textiles under Regulation No. 77/2019 was just one of many similar import regimes recently adopted by Indonesia (for example, the most recent, Regulation No. 68/2020 on import provisions for footwear, electronics, and bicycles/tricycles, which had entered into force on 28 August 2020) with the clear and expressly stated objective of stimulating and protecting the domestic industry and curbing imports. This appeared to be protectionist in nature and was being pursued with policies, measures, and practices of dubious WTO consistency. She said that her delegation reserved its rights to provide further comments on this, including in other WTO meetings.

8.3. The European Union looked forward to discussing this matter both bilaterally with Indonesia, and within this Committee. It also looked forward to receiving Indonesia's replies to the following questions on Regulation No. 77/2019:

- (i) Could Indonesia please indicate how its import regime for textiles products and textiles meets the obligations under Article 1 of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures?
- (ii) Could Indonesia explain why it did not fulfil its transparency obligations under Articles 1 and 5 of the Import Licensing Agreement?
- (iii) In light of Indonesia having fallen short of these obligations, could Indonesia indicate whether traders, who were taken by surprise by the application of Regulation No. 77/2019 without advance notification to the WTO, could at least complete their importations into Indonesia under the previous regime?
- (iv) Could Indonesia indicate whether finished textiles products, listed in the Annex to Regulation No. 77/2019, may be imported into Indonesia for purposes other than further processing by domestic producer importers, their cooperating production parties, and/or small- and mid-sized industries?
- (v) If so, could Indonesia provide the following information:
 - (a) How many licences have been issued for the importation of finished textiles products for retail or trading purposes since the entry into force of Regulation No. 77/2019?
 - (b) What volumes of finished textiles products, imported for retail purposes or for trading, have entered Indonesia since the entry into force of Regulation No. 77/2019?
 - (c) From which country did the finished textiles products, imported for retail purposes or for trading, since the entry into force of Regulation No. 77/2019, originate?
- (vi) Could Indonesia indicate whether it believes that the import prohibition maintained under Regulation No. 85/2015, as last amended by Regulation No. 77/2019, is consistent with Article XI of the GATT?

- (vii) If so, could Indonesia explain why, *de facto* if not *de jure*, no import licence has been issued, since the entry into force of Regulation No. 77/2019, for the importation of finished textiles products from the European Union for retail purposes or for trading?

8.4. The representative of the European Union concluded by saying that her delegation would submit these questions to Indonesia in writing and likewise looked forward to receiving Indonesia's replies in writing.

8.5. The representative of Indonesia expressed her delegation's gratitude to the European Union for its concern regarding the import licensing requirements for textiles and textiles products. She said that since Indonesia had not yet received the written questions from the European Union, the responses they would provide would be preliminary. She stated that the import regime for textiles and textiles products (TPT), had been updated following the entry into force, on 16 October 2019, of Indonesia's Ministry of Trade Regulation No. 77 of 2019 regarding the "Second Amendment on the Ministry of Trade Regulation No. 85/M-DAG/PER/10/2015 Regarding the Provisions on the Imports of Textiles and Textile Products". This regulation aimed at further increasing the effectiveness of the implementation of textiles and textiles products import policy. The Government of Indonesia took the European Union's concerns on this matter seriously and realized the importance of proper regulation to maximize trade and, at the same time, to prevent unnecessary trade barriers. Indonesia was also committed to complying with and to respecting the agreements that it had signed, including, in this case, the Import Licensing Agreement. Therefore, she concluded that her delegation would coordinate with the relevant parties to further investigate this issue in order to find a solution to it.

8.6. The Committee took note of the statements made.

9 THAILAND: IMPORTATION OF FEED WHEAT IN THAILAND – STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

9.1. The representative of the European Union noted that Thailand had not submitted any annual notification of its import licensing procedures since 2013. She strongly encouraged Thailand to comply with its notification requirements and wanted to hear from Thailand about the reasons for this delay. She also expressed her delegation's concern regarding the import licensing procedures for feed wheat introduced by Thailand, and asked Thailand why these import licensing procedures had not been notified in accordance with Articles 1.4 and 5 of the Import Licensing Agreement. She reminded Thailand that her delegation had not yet received written replies to their questions submitted and circulated in documents G/LIC/Q/THA/3 and G/LIC/Q/THA/4. She reiterated her delegation's interest in understanding on what basis the measure, announced as temporary, could be maintained for so long, and when it would cease to apply. Her delegation also wished to receive a detailed description of the import licensing procedures to be applied.

9.2. She stated her delegation's request to receive relevant data about the actual situation of the market of corn in order to better understand Thailand's justification of the measure. Based on the information that the European Union had gathered, the average domestic prices had seen an increasing trend since the introduction of the measure in late 2016. She said that, as per their written questions, the European Union understood that the Government of Thailand had launched a support programme for corn production in September 2018 in order to provide incentives to rice farmers to divert their farming to corn during the drought period and to fill in the gap between the domestic demand for corn (8 million MT) and the domestic production (5 million MT). The programme provided both financial support (minimum price guarantee, crop insurance premium subsidy, and soft loans for inputs and management costs in the post harvesting period) and non-financial support (marketing and technical assistances) to farmers who switched their farming from rice to corn, which seemed to contradict the alleged market oversupply of domestic corn. Therefore, the European Union asked Thailand to clarify how its government support for the expansion of corn production could be reconciled with the alleged market oversupply of domestic corn.

9.3. In addition, she noted that the above-mentioned support programme had ended in September 2019. A deficiency payment scheme had subsequently been put in place, starting from December 2019, with an even higher guaranteed price (8.5 Baht/KG compared to 8 Baht/KG under the production support programme). Noting that it had not yet done so, her delegation encouraged Thailand to notify these support programmes and measures to the WTO Agriculture Committee in a timely manner.

9.4. In conclusion, she stated that, setting aside its earlier questions on the market situation, the European Union had a significant concern about the WTO compatibility of Thailand's import licensing regime for feed wheat. The European Union was looking forward to receiving detailed written replies to its questions circulated in document G/LIC/Q/THA/3 and document G/LIC/Q/THA/4.

9.5. The representative of Thailand thanked the European Union for their questions regarding the importation of feed wheat and informed the Committee that, from January to August 2020, Thailand had imported approximately 1.14 million tonnes of feed wheat, an increase from the same period in 2019, in which the import volume had been approximately one million tonnes. Furthermore, between 2017 and 2019, Thailand's average import volume of feed wheat had been 1.72 million tonnes annually. Her delegation expected that the total import volume of feed wheat in 2020 would be similar to previous years. She said that her delegation had consulted with relevant stakeholders in Thailand, including farmers and industries, with a view to improving the supply chain of animal feeds. Thailand would review this measure, which required an in-depth examination of various factors, as well as a comprehensive analysis of its economic and social impact. She stated that her delegation looked forward to sharing further information in due course. Regarding notification, she recalled that Thailand had submitted a notification under Article 7.3 of the Agreement on 18 September, which had been circulated to Members on 6 October 2020, in document G/LIC/N/3/THA/7.

9.6. The Committee took note of the statements made.

10 CHINA – CHANGES TO IMPORT LICENSING FOR CERTAIN RECOVERABLE MATERIALS - STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES

10.1. The representative of the United States said that her delegation had significant concerns about the changes to import licensing surrounding China's implementation of its import ban on solid waste, including recyclable materials such as certain plastic and paper scrap, while allowing certain "recycled raw materials" such as copper, aluminium, and brass to be imported as long as those materials met strict purity standards. The United States also had concerns with apparent fundamental differences between requirements for foreign and domestic commodities. She said that these abrupt restrictions and progressively restrictive bans had left many United States recyclers without viable alternative processing capacity. The global shortfall in processing capacity had also caused the decline and, in some cases, collapse in prices for some recyclable materials. She noted that the pervasive market instability engendered by China's measures had led to a halt in recycling among some US municipal recycling programmes, resulting in the incineration or landfill disposal of otherwise saleable commodities. She recalled that the United States had raised the issue of certain recyclable materials at several previous meetings of the Committee. The United States had also asked China to notify to the Committee any changes to its import licensing regime. Unfortunately, China had yet to provide information about its current licensing procedures and any planned changes that would have been sufficient to alleviate their concerns. She asked China if they had considered less trade-restrictive alternatives to outright bans on materials.

10.2. She added that the United States also had concerns that certain scrap materials, such as bundled recycled newspaper, would be banned, whereas other more processed scrap materials, such as pulped paper and "smelter ready" metals, would be allowed. In this respect she asked China to explain the scientific basis it used to determine which categories of scrap materials were safe and which were not. She also asked China to explain the new import licensing requirements under this policy and to state when it would notify these changes to this Committee.

10.3. Going forward, the United States asked that China adhere to its notification obligations in a timely manner under the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures with respect to any new import measures. Finally, she reiterated her delegation's prior request that China halt its implementation of the existing and planned measures. She stated, as she had noted in her intervention, that China's scrap ban was having a detrimental effect on global recycling markets and might, in fact, cause more environmental damage than good in the long-term.

10.4. The representative of China thanked the United States for their concerns on this issue. He said that solid waste was different from other normal goods due to its inherent polluting attributes. He noted that the contaminants and residues generated by the disposal process of solid waste caused serious environmental pollution and harmed human, animal, and plant health heavily.

China, as a developing country, had suffered for decades because of the solid waste imported into China from other countries. Given the great challenges in addressing environmental pollution, it was imperative for China to implement measures to limit the negative effect of importing and processing solid waste. From a worldwide perspective, the danger of solid waste had been acknowledged by almost every country. According to the Brussels Convention and other internationally accepted principles, every country had the obligation to properly handle and dispose of its domestically produced solid waste. He said that his delegation hoped that exporting countries could live up to their international responsibilities to handle and dispose of their own solid waste rather than seeking to realize benefits at the cost of the environment of other countries. Regarding transparency, he said that China had fully taken into consideration its obligations under the WTO during the process of developing its relevant policies; it had also notified the relevant measures to the WTO. He added that his delegation would fully notify other measures, as required by other agreements. He said that his delegation had taken note of the concerns of the United States and that these would be transmitted to their Capital in due course.

10.5. The Committee took note of the statements made.

11 INDIA – IMPORT LICENSING REQUIREMENT FOR BORIC ACID - STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES

11.1. The representative of the United States said that her delegation had been concerned for some time over India's import licensing requirements for boric acid, particularly with respect to the burdensome end-use certificates necessary for importation. She recalled that her delegation's concerns had begun more than a decade ago, when India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry had introduced a rule stating that "imports of boric acid for non-insecticidal purposes will be subject to an import permit issued by the Central Insecticide Board and Registration Committee under the Ministry of Agriculture". The import application required an applicant to attest "that imported material is not for sale but for use as per our own requirement as stated in this application." This statement required that non-insecticidal boric acid could only be imported directly by a manufacturer and prevented independent traders from importing boric acid for resale purposes. The rule also required the importer of non-insecticidal boric acid to provide the precise end-use of the product prior to importation, as well as the historical import and production data of the finished product. This information was subject to a formal government review process.

11.2. In addition, she noted that Indian importers had expressed frustration because, in import licensing applications, they were required to supply information on the past consumption of boric acid and production of the finished product, which was information often unavailable to importers. Her delegation continued to request that India explain why boric acid, which had a toxicity level roughly equivalent to that of table salt, was the only insecticide that required an import permit for non-insecticidal use, considering its low toxicity level compared to other insecticides that did not require an import permit.

11.3. In closing, she said that her delegation continued to request India to amend its Schedule-I (Imports) of the ITC (HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items in order to eliminate the requirement that imports of boric acid for non-insecticidal purposes must obtain an import permit. She hoped that their recent bilateral negotiations in this area would bring about a mutually beneficial resolution.

11.4. The representative of India thanked the United States for their continued interest in the matter relating to imports of boric acid, but said that India had already submitted its relevant replies in documents G/LIC/Q/IND/12, G/LIC/Q/IND/14, G/LIC/Q/IND/16, and G/LIC/Q/IND/22, explaining in detail the policy objectives of the measure as well as issues relating to its implementation. In the case of boric acid imported for non-insecticidal use, such imports were exempted from the requirement of registration under the India Insecticide Act, and import permits were issued instead on the basis of certificates of end use. Domestic producers had to conform to similar measures, including the declaration of production and sales information in this regard. Moreover, an end-use certificate was a prerequisite for making an application for an import permit for insecticides for non-insecticidal use. It was applicable to all insecticides that were proposed to be imported for non-insecticidal uses.

11.5. The Committee took note of the statements made.

12 INDONESIA – IMPORT LICENSING REGIME FOR CELLPHONES, HANDHELD COMPUTERS, AND TABLETS - STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES

12.1. The representative of the United States said that, as the Committee was well aware, the United States held a long-standing concern over Indonesia's import licensing regime and, in particular, the import licensing requirements for cell phones, handheld computers, and tablets. The United States, and other Members, had been raising this issue since 2013, both in this Committee and bilaterally. She regretted that her delegation was obliged to raise this issue again on this occasion. She recalled that, in past questions to Indonesia, the United States had sought clarity regarding the specific requirements of Indonesia's import licensing regime, and an understanding of the rationale for the requirements overall. Her delegation acknowledged the responses provided by Indonesia in May 2017. Unfortunately, as previously noted, Indonesia's responses had not resolved their concerns over these import licensing requirements, and in some instances had not sufficiently addressed the questions being asked.

12.2. She stated that her delegation continued to seek Indonesia's explanation for why the requirements of the import licensing regime treated 3G and 4G technology differently. They also continued to seek an understanding of why Indonesia required both a licence to import generally, which divided companies into those that imported for further processing ("API-P") and those that imported finished products ("API-U"), as well as a separate licence for specific products, in this case for 4G LTE products, including a requirement to obtain a recommendation from the specific ministry with regulatory responsibility.

12.3. She noted that it remained unclear whether domestic companies were subject to requirements equivalent to those imposed upon importers. For example, there appeared to be a different requirement for domestic companies with regard to the use of distributors. When asked to identify similar requirements for domestic producers, Indonesia had provided no specific information. And based on Indonesia's responses to date, it appeared clear that Indonesia's system favoured imports meant for further processing (that is, in-country assembly) as opposed to imports of finished products.

12.4. She underlined that the issues that the United States had raised today, and on multiple previous occasions, were serious. In their view, these import licensing requirements had distorted trade and investment in an important and dynamic sector that was of significance to both the United States and the global economy. She further noted that the proliferation of burdensome import licensing measures in Indonesia and, in particular, those that mandated the purchase of local goods, had had a negative impact on Indonesia's reputation among investors. Her delegation believed that such policies were to Indonesia's own detriment and noted that Indonesia's ICT Minister had estimated that Indonesia was losing nearly two trillion rupiah (US\$135 million) annually from illegal cell phone imports.

12.5. She drew the Committee's attention to the information that, in their recent engagement, Indonesia had stated that it intended to undertake a comprehensive review of the local content requirements attached to its import licensing regime for 4G products. Therefore, her delegation was concerned that, despite this commitment, Indonesia had recently issued a new regulation, Ministry of Industry Regulation 22 of 2020, that appeared intended to expand to other electronic products the local content requirements attached to this import licensing regime. The United States asked that the Indonesian delegation provide an update to the Committee on the status of this comprehensive review.

12.6. Lastly, she said that her delegation appreciated that Indonesia had notified some of these measures to this Committee. However, they continued to urge Indonesia to notify all of the associated measures, including Ministry of Industry Regulations 108/2012, 68/2016, and 29/2017, KOMINFO Regulations 7/2019 and 16/2018, and KOMINFO Circular Letter 518/2017. And they continued to urge Indonesia to reconsider these import licensing requirements for cell phones, handheld computers, and tablets.

12.7. The representative of the European Union echoed the statement by the United States. She said that her delegation shared the same concerns and invited Indonesia to eliminate its burdensome and discriminatory licensing requirements. Her delegation was also looking forward to receiving

updated information from Indonesia, including Indonesia's replies to the questions and comments from the United States.

12.8. The representative of Indonesia thanked the United States for their continued interest in Indonesia's import licensing regime for cell phones, handheld computers, and tablets. In responding to the concerns expressed by the United States, she referred to their responses at previous meetings of the Committee. She said that the Government of Indonesia was committed to providing easy and straightforward import licensing procedures, especially for cell phones, handheld computers, and tablets, by digitalizing the submission of the application for import approval. She noted that the time required was relatively short, when the documents submitted met the relevant requirements. In terms of transparency, she said that the regulations could be easily accessed on the website of the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia (<http://jdih.kemendag.go.id/peraturan>). Regarding the local content requirement, she said that Indonesia was willing to discuss the issue in the Committee on Trade-Related Investment Measures.

12.9. The Committee took note of the statements made.

13 INDIA – QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTIONS ON CERTAIN PULSES – STATEMENT BY CANADA AND AUSTRALIA

13.1. The representative of Canada stated that, as the largest supplier of pulses to India, Canada had been most negatively affected by India's measures to limit the import of pulses. Pulses were an important source of protein for many Indian consumers and Canada was a high quality and reliable supplier. Canada was disappointed that India continued to use quantitative restrictions on the import of dried peas and other pulses. This situation had been going on for more than two years. It was difficult for Canada to see how India could still be claiming that these measures were temporary.

13.2. He recalled that, on 28 March 2020, the Government of India had extended certain requirements and established new, more stringent requirements, designed to further limit the importation of dried peas in the fiscal year 2020/2021, including: a requirement that all shipments of dried peas entered via the port of Kolkata; a minimum import price for dried peas set at around six times the price at which imported dried peas had traditionally been traded; and a quantitative restriction allocation of 0 MT for the import of yellow dried peas, which implicitly banned all imports of yellow peas into India. He said that Canada was especially interested to know if India could provide its rationale for setting the dried peas quota to zero tonnes for yellow peas. His delegation had previously expressed its views on the consistency of India's quantitative restrictions with its WTO obligations. Canada was concerned about India's continued trend towards establishing even more stringent import restrictive measures, while ignoring the fundamental rules of the GATT and the Agreement on Agriculture.

13.3. In its response to the questionnaire on import licensing, document G/LIC/N/3/IND/19, submitted to the Committee on 30 October 2019, India had specified that its import restrictions were being maintained on the grounds of protection of human health or safety, animal or plant life or health, security and the environment. Furthermore, at the June 2020 Council for Trade in Goods, India had justified these quantitative restrictions, minimum import prices, and discretionary import licensing procedures (such as limiting imports to one single port of entry), by arguing that Article 4.2 of the Agreement on Agriculture did not envisage the tariffication of temporary or short-term measures, and by claiming the public morals exception under GATT Article XXI.

13.4. Canada questioned the validity of such a rationale. Moreover, India had not responded to Canada's request to clarify how these stated objectives were advanced through India's quantitative restrictions on dried peas and other pulses, and why less trade-distorting approaches had not been considered. He underlined that the elimination of quantitative restrictions was a fundamental principle of the GATT and of the Agreement on Agriculture. Indeed, Article 4.2 of the Agreement on Agriculture prohibited the use of agriculture-specific non-tariff measures. Such measures included quantitative import restrictions, minimum import prices, and discretionary import licensing, such as those being used by India. In conclusion, he reiterated his delegation's call for India immediately and expeditiously to review its trade-restrictive measures put in place on pulses and to implement alternative, WTO-consistent policy options that promoted a predictable and transparent import regime for pulses.

13.5. The representative of Australia recalled that it was just over one year since the last formal meeting of the Import Licensing Committee, and that, globally, a lot had happened in this time, since the detection of COVID-19. However, and disappointingly, India had not changed its highly restrictive measures on pulses imports, particularly its quantitative restrictions on a variety of pulses, for which India has failed to provide a sufficient explanation of their WTO basis, and which India had implemented for more than three years. He said that these were no longer temporary measures and must be removed. He noted that this was a long-held concern of Australia and a number of other Members, including developing Members. Pulses were not a "small" commodity for India, neither by tonnage or by value produced and consumed, nor with respect to trade.

13.6. He noted that, since the last meeting of this Committee, in Notice No. 42/2019-20 of 19 December 2019, India had amended the import licensing requirements by implementing quantitative restrictions on a range of pulses, including end-use restrictions and requirements to import by certain dates. For example, for the quantitative restrictions for Urad, India had allotted quantities only to millers and refiners, provided that they had refining and processing capacity; and they had initially provided a very short time-frame for applications for the quota.

13.7. He further noted that recently, on 1 October 2020, India had announced what appeared to be an additional 150,000 tonnes of Urad under the existing quantitative restrictions, and had notified in Notice No. 22/2015-2020 the corresponding import licensing procedures. The additional tonnage would be available only among the eligible and verified applicants allocated quotas in June 2020. He said that his delegation had a range of questions on these changes and on how they were administered, in particular with regard to end-use requirements and time-frames for application. His delegation would follow-up with these questions separately.

13.8. He pointed out that, since the Committee's previous meeting, in addition to the restrictive import licensing requirements on Urad, India had placed restrictive import licensing requirements on peas. On 18 December 2019, India had announced, in Notification No. 37/2015-2020, that imports of peas could only occur at a minimum import price (MIP) of Rs. 200/, and only through the Kolkata seaport. He then asked India whether they could explain the policy reasons for the restrictive import licensing requirements on peas, and how the MIP and port restriction could be consistent with India's WTO commitments.

13.9. He noted that these restrictive import licensing requirements were part of a broader overall set of concerns that Australia and other WTO Members had been raising on India's quantitative restrictions on pulses over the last three years. Once again, Australia called on India to remove its quantitative restrictions on pulses; to bring its measures into compliance with India's WTO commitments; and to ensure transparency and predictability with respect to pulses imports.

13.10. The representative of the United States shared Australia's and Canada's concerns regarding India's import licensing requirements for select varieties of pulses. She urged India to consider less trade-restrictive requirements and to notify future relevant measures and regulations in a timely manner.

13.11. The representative of the European Union shared the concerns expressed by Canada and Australia about the Indian pulses policy, in particular regarding India's quantitative import restrictions and sudden increases in import duties. She said that the European Union found it hard to comprehend that, after three years of the quantitative import restrictions being in place, India was still unable and unwilling to reply to questions concerning its policy's conformity with WTO rules. She recalled that, for over three years, Members had repeatedly been told that the measure was temporary; but after three years, this was no longer a temporary measure. The European Union urged India quickly to eliminate this trade-distorting measure.

13.12. The representative of India thanked the delegations of Canada, Australia, the United States, and the European Union, for expressing their views on the matter. He noted that many of the issues raised in this Committee had also been raised in the meetings of other Councils and Committees. The last such meeting was the meeting of the Committee on Agriculture, held on 22 September 2020. In that context, he had reiterated, on behalf of his delegation, that quantitative restrictions on imports of certain varieties of pulses were necessary, considering the domestic demand and supply situation of pulses in India. They were aimed at alleviating the trade cost to small and marginal farmers and its consequent impact on their food and livelihood security. He

added that, regarding the specific WTO provisions under which such measures had been imposed, India had already replied to similar queries by Members in the Committee on Market Access and in the Council for Trade in Goods. He referred Members to India's responses to questions posed on these issues in the respective WTO bodies.

13.13. The Committee took note of the statements made.

14 THIRTEENTH BIENNIAL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION OF THE AGREEMENT (G/LIC/W/54)

14.1. The Chairperson stated that Article 7.1 of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures provided that "the Committee shall review as necessary, but at least once every two years, the implementation and operation of this Agreement". He recalled that the twelfth biennial review was held at the Committee meeting in October 2018 and, according to the rules, the Committee was to undertake the thirteenth biennial review at this meeting. To this end, the Secretariat had drafted a factual report under its own responsibility for consideration by the Committee. The report had been circulated in document G/LIC/W/54, which covered the period from 23 October 2018 to 9 October 2020. Once updated, the report would later be circulated as document G/L/29, taking into consideration the views of Members as expressed at this meeting. New notifications submitted between 28 September, when the Airgram for this meeting had been issued, and 9 October, would also be reflected in the final report. He noted that there had been some new developments in this biennial report, as compared to previous versions. For example, a new Section 5 had been added, in which the Secretariat had provided in-depth analysis regarding new N/2 notifications. He sought Members' views and comments.

14.2. The Committee adopted the report (G/LIC/W/54).

15 DRAFT REPORT (2020) OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS (G/LIC/W/53)

15.1. The Chairperson informed the Committee that a draft report to the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG), covering the activities of the Committee in 2020, had been circulated in document G/LIC/W/53 for the Committee's consideration. He noted that new notifications and documents received since the issuing of the draft report would be included in the final report.²

15.2. The Committee adopted the report.

16 IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY IN NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES OF THE AGREEMENT – REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

16.1. The Chairperson said that improving transparency was an important focus of the Committee's work. Since the last Committee meeting, there had been a significant increase in notifications submitted by Members under Article 5.1-5.4 of the Agreement. This positive development had been reflected in the Committee's annual report to the CTG, as well as in the biennial report on the operation and implementation of the Agreement (2019-2020). Another positive development was the official launch of the new import licensing website at this meeting. This was the first database of import licensing measures. It contained thousands of import licensing-related laws, regulations, and administrative procedures enforced by governments around the world. And making it publicly accessible not only improved transparency but could also help reduce trade costs.

16.2. He noted that the question of how to improve Members' compliance regarding their notification obligations under Article 7.3, namely their replies to the annual questionnaire, remained a challenge for the Committee. At the informal meeting held on 29 January 2020, his predecessor, Ms Carol Tsang of Hong Kong, China, based on her consultations, had outlined a number of challenges faced by Members in preparing their replies to the annual questionnaire, along with possible ways to address those problems. He said that, as the Committee's new Chairperson, he was willing to follow-up on the subject and to move the process forward if Members so wished.

² The final report was circulated in document G/L/1369.

16.3. The representative of Switzerland said that her delegation saw potential for easing notification requirements by making the questionnaire more user-friendly and thanked the former Chairperson of the Committee and the Secretariat for their efforts. She also welcomed the Chairperson's willingness to continue this process and stood ready to support him in that process.

16.4. The Committee took note of the Chairperson's report and of the statement made.

17 CONTACT LIST OF DELEGATIONS

17.1. The Chairperson introduced a "List of Representatives and Contact Information" prepared by the Secretariat for the Committee, which had been circulated in document G/LIC/INF/2. The purpose of establishing this list was to facilitate communications among officials responsible for import licensing issues, both in Geneva and in capitals. The contact list was meant to provide updated information on a regular basis. Members could also find the same information on the WTO import licensing website. He pointed out that, as for any other database, the value of this newly established list was subject to the timeliness and accuracy of Members' updates and cooperation. Therefore, he encouraged Members to review the list and provide updated information to the Secretariat on a regular basis.

17.2. The representative of the European Union thanked the Secretariat for having prepared this contact list of delegations. However, in the light of the European Union's full competence on trade matters, she asked the Secretariat to review this document to take into account that there was only one single contact for the European Union, and no separate contacts for individual European Union member States. This was to avoid creating confusion for other WTO Members as far as the European Union contact point was concerned.³

17.3. The Committee took note of the statements made.

18 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

18.1. The Chairperson informed delegations that the Secretariat had tentatively reserved Wednesday, 21 April 2021, as the date of the Committee's next formal meeting, on the understanding that the final date would be confirmed in an email well in advance of the meeting, and that additional meetings may be convened as required.

19 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

19.1. The Chairperson recalled that the Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Committee on Import Licensing established that the Committee on Import Licensing will elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from among the representatives of Members. Regarding the Vice-Chairpersonship, he had held consultations with Members and proposed Mrs Stephania Aquilina of Malta as the Vice-Chairperson of this Committee for 2020. An email had been circulated on 6 October seeking Members' views and endorsement of her Vice-Chairpersonship. No objection had been received. He, therefore proposed that Mrs Stephania Aquilina be elected as Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.

19.2. The Committee so decided.

20 OTHER BUSINESS

20.1. The European Union raised a point under other business regarding *Indonesia – Importation of Alcoholic Beverages*. The representative of the European Union said that her delegation was deeply concerned about the *de facto* ban imposed on imports of EU alcoholic beverages into Indonesia. She noted that this was a discriminatory situation lasting since April 2019 and persisting despite several written assurances to the contrary. Indonesian importers of alcoholic beverages were denied the possibility to clear products of EU origin despite having received the allocation for imports of products of other origins. She said that this was occurring in violation of Indonesian import licensing procedures and seemingly in retaliation for the European Union's policies on renewable energy. She cited Indonesia's concern over the European Union's renewable energy policies and their perceived

³ A revised List of Representatives and Contact Information was circulated in document G/LIC/INF/2/Rev.1.

negative impact on palm oil. Indonesia's initiation of a WTO dispute settlement case against the European Union was a legitimate action: resort to dispute settlement and adjudication of this matter by the WTO was the correct path to follow. However, as a WTO Member, Indonesia must refrain from applying any unilateral retaliatory measures and wait instead for the finalization of dispute settlement procedures. She stated that the European Union expected an immediate solution to the current situation and urged Indonesia immediately to allow imports from all European Union member States.

20.2. The representative of Indonesia said that her delegation had taken note of the information from the European Union and asked the European Union to submit its comments in writing for further discussion.

20.3. The Committee took note of the statements made.

20.4. The Chairperson said that he had been informed by the Secretariat that Dr Xiaodong Wang would take over as Secretary to the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) Committee and that Dr Carlo Gamberale would replace Dr Xiaodong Wang as Secretary to the Committee on Import Licensing. He recalled that recent years had witnessed dynamic changes and much fruitful activity in this Committee. For example, a new notification form had been established; the new import licensing website had been created and launched; and an advanced Geneva-based import licensing workshop had been created and made a regular event. In this context, he thanked Dr Xiaodong Wang for his contribution to the work of the Committee on Import Licensing over the past seven years and wished him all the best in his future endeavours.

20.5. Dr Xiaodong Wang thanked Members for their active participation in this Committee over the past few years, and the Chairpersons with whom he had served, in particular Carol Tsang of Hong Kong, China, and Lorena Rivera of Colombia, without whose leadership and guidance Members would not have the new notification form and the import licensing website. He also thanked his Director, Mrs Suja Rishikesh Mavroidis, for her guidance, and his team, Donna Wood, Karine Grange, Irina Tarasenko, and Irena Giraud, for all the detailed work behind the scenes. Donna Wood had reviewed thousands of notifications and uploaded them onto the website as well as working on the development of the database from the beginning. Karine Grange had assisted the Committee by formatting all the notifications. And Irina Tarasenko had worked on the analysis and developed the useful tables that were inserted in the annual report this year. He also welcomed Carlo Gamberale, the new Secretary to the Committee. He concluded by saying that it had been a great honour and that he had enjoyed working with all Members in the Committee over the past few years.

20.6. The representative of Hong Kong, China thanked Xiaodong, not only in her capacity as former Chairperson of the Committee, but also as a delegate. She said that Xiaodong had impressed her very much as Secretary to the Committee, going the extra mile and taking additional initiatives for the Committee's benefit. She considered that the many achievements that had been accomplished had been possible because of Xiaodong's efforts and competent leadership of a very professional and dedicated team.

20.7. The representative of the Philippines thanked Xiaodong and his team for the technical assistance provided to their delegation, which had enabled them to catch up and update their notifications in the Committee. In particular, they were thankful for the workshop that had been conducted in Manila in 2019, which had greatly helped their various agencies to understand and prepare a notification under the Agreement. Her delegation wished Xiaodong all the best and welcomed Carlo to the Committee.

20.8. The representative of China extended his delegation's heartfelt thanks to Xiaodong for his dedicated work and constructive contribution. They wished a bright future to Xiaodong and looked forward to continuing working with him in his new position.

20.9. The representative of Colombia echoed the congratulations to Xiaodong from other delegations. She said that it had been a pleasure working with him and that they recognized the excellent job that he had done, together with other colleagues from the Division. She also congratulated him on his new position and looked forward to working with him on other issues in the future, as well as with the new Secretary to the Committee.

20.10. The representative of the United States extended the sincere thanks of her delegation to Xiaodong for his hard work in the Committee over several years, and also welcomed Carlo to the Committee as its new Secretary, noting that he was very fortunate in having such a fantastic team working with him.

20.11. The representative of the European Union thanked Xiaodong for all the efforts he had made in reinvigorating the Committee. She had worked on the Committee for several years and had seen a real evolution in its work, which had become very active thanks to Xiaodong's efforts. She also welcomed the new Secretary and looked forward to working closely with him.
