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Page: 1/2

Committee on Import Licensing

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IMPORT LICENSING SYSTEM OF SAINT LUCIA

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE UNITED STATES (G/LIC/Q/LCA/1) TO SAINT LUCIA IN RELATION TO THE IMPORT LICENSING SYSTEM OF SAINT LUCIA

The following communication, dated 11 April 2014, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Saint Lucia.

Question 1:

The laws and regulations relating to Saint Lucia's import licensing procedures are contained in the following:

- External Trade Act Chapter 13.11
- External Trade (Restricted Imports) (Amendment) Order No. 118 of 2012

These laws and regulations are published in the Official Gazette of Saint Lucia, prior to and after assent. The Official Gazette is published weekly.

Question 2

Saint Lucia is a small island developing state with an economy that is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly hurricanes. Man-made externalities such as climate change are also posing additional risks to the country's agriculture sector, its food security and rural development. The island has the further vulnerability of a high level of dependency on external sources for most of its food supplies including animal protein.¹ This dependency is currently estimated at approximately eighty (80 percent) for poultry products and seventy (70%) for pork respectively. Given the importance of these key sources of animal protein for the diet and for the nutritional wellbeing of the resident population, the Government has taken the policy decision to increase local production of these products thereby reducing the country's external dependence and susceptibility to any disruption in their supply from outbreaks of animal health disease or other threats.

This action which is part of ongoing efforts to boost non-banana agriculture has the added objective of increasing rural employment which has been particularly low especially in the wake of the decline in the island's banana industry which once served as the main source of rural employment and economic stability.

Accordingly the Government's rationale for its action is based on its efforts and strategy to respond to these challenges and threats. The policy change is intended to achieve multiple objectives including increased food and nutritional security and the promotion of rural employment and development.

This action is also taken in the context of the *Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security in Rome in 2009* which noted that food security should be a national issue that reflects highly in national programmes.

¹ This has led to an unsustainably high food import bill with potential adverse balance of payment implications in terms of a widening current account deficit.

Notwithstanding, the Government of Saint Lucia wishes to notify that this policy is non-discriminatory in its application and that the measure which aims at a 10% increase in the domestic purchase requirement for poultry products is being implemented in an incremental manner of 5% in two phases and is subject to periodic review.

Question 3

The Government of Saint Lucia ensures that import licensing procedures are administered in a manner consistent with the principles and obligations of the WTO Agreement by ensuring that all importers are notified, in advance of the implementation of any amendments in relation to Saint Lucia's Import Licensing Procedures.

Stakeholders and importers are notified after consultations by letter and via publications in the Government's Official Gazette.

Question 4

The Government of Saint Lucia's most recent notification on Import Licensing Procedures was submitted to the Import Licensing Committee on July 16, 2013. Saint Lucia's Notification under Article 1.4 (a), and Article 8.2 (b) of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures can be obtained in WTO document No. 13-4913 (G/LIC/N/1/LCA/4) dated 17 September 2013. Notification under Article 7.3 of the Agreement is available in WTO document No. 13-4910 (G/LIC/N/3/LCA/6) of 17 September 2013.

Question 5

Please refer to the Market Access Division of the WTO Secretariat, for July 2013 notifications and relevant copies of laws and regulations including Schedule 2 of the External Trade Act, Chapter 13.11 of the Revised Laws of Saint Lucia.
