The following information on the introduction of substantial changes in the Harmonized System is circulated at the request of the Committee on Tariff Concessions.

1. For the past few years, the Customs Co-operation Council has been undertaking a review of the Harmonized System to keep it up-to-date with changes in technology and in patterns in international trade. A sub-committee prepared a Recommendation to the Council of the CCC regarding those changes.

2. The draft Recommendation amending the Harmonized System which had been adopted by the Harmonized System Committee at its 11th Session was approved by the Council of the CCC at its 81st/82nd Sessions on 6 July 1993.

3. In accordance with the provisions laid down in the Harmonized System Convention, the Recommendation was formally notified to Contracting parties of the CCC on 15 July 1993. The amendments contained in the Recommendation will be deemed to be accepted on 1 January 1994, provided that there is no objection outstanding on that date. The amendments will then enter into force on 1 January 1996.

4. The Correlation Tables between the 1992 and 1996 HS nomenclatures are an essential device for the preparation of several instruments like new national customs tariffs; a trade statistical classification based upon the 1996 version of the Harmonized System; for the modification of HS-based international nomenclatures such as the SITC/Rev.3 and for preparations for possible GATT Article XXVIII negotiations. Up to now, the general practice followed by the Harmonized System Committee has been to entrust the CCC Secretariat with the preparation of the Correlation Tables, the HS Committee not being involved. However, it has now been agreed that the preparation of these Tables should take place under the responsibility of the HS Committee.

5. At its 12th Session held in October 1993, the Harmonized System Committee approved a timetable for implementing the 1996 version of the Harmonized System and agreed among other items that the Secretariat’s draft Correlation Tables would be examined by the presessional Working Party of the 13th Session of the Harmonized System Committee to be held in April 1994. These Tables would be adopted by the HS Committee at that meeting and could then be circulated to the GATT contracting parties soon after.

6. According to the GATT Procedures to Implement Changes in the Harmonized System which are contained in document L/6905 of 20 September 1991, no later than 120 days after Correlation Tables have been circulated, GATT Contracting Parties shall submit to the Secretariat a notification which includes the pages of their loose-leaf schedules containing proposed changes. The details on the documentation to be submitted in this context are described in the above GATT document.