COMMUNICATION FROM THE UNITED STATES

The following communication, dated 4 April 2006, from the Delegation of the United States, is being circulated in advance of the Negotiating Group meeting of 5-7 April.

EXPRESS SHIPMENTS

1. The United States submits for consideration summarized elements of a proposal for a commitment to provide specific expedited procedures for express shipments.

I. ELEMENTS OF A COMMITMENT ON EXPRESS SHIPMENTS

- **Expedited Procedures**: Provide for separate and expedited customs procedures for express shipments, without limitation as to maximum weight or customs value of shipment.

- **Operator-Customs Arrangement**: Provide a process for each express consignment operator to create a mutually acceptable arrangement with Customs, which provides adequate infrastructure, financial security, and advance information, in return for expedited Customs procedures and release.

- **Pre-arrival processing**: Provide for submission and processing of information necessary for the release of an express shipment before its physical arrival.

- **Single Manifest**: Provide for the submission of a single manifest covering all goods transported in an express shipment, preferably through electronic means.

- **"de minimis" treatment**: Provide that for shipments valued at US$200 or less, no duties or taxes will be assessed, and no formal entry documents will be required.

- **Express Clearance**: Procedures allow clearance of express shipments within one hour after the submission of the necessary customs documents, provided the shipment has arrived.

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II. ELEMENTS ALSO TO BE ADDRESSED BY MEMBERS AS NEGOTIATIONS PROCEED:

• Special and Differential Treatment and Technical Assistance elements, including:
  o Assessments: identify individual specific needs and priorities of Members;
  o Assistance elements: Develop necessary administrative process, regulations and laws; train customs officers, establish partnerships with private sector;
  o Explore availability and effective utilization of private sector assistance resources;
  o Deferred or temporary partial implementation of commitments.