



ANNOUNCEMENT

WCO Harmonized System Committee adopts amendments to the international Harmonized System goods nomenclature

At its 43rd Session which took place at WCO Headquarters from 9 to 20 March 2009, the Harmonized System (HS) Committee adopted amendments to the international HS goods nomenclature in the context of the fourth review cycle. These amendments will be submitted to the WCO Council for approval in June 2009.

Environmental and social issues are a major feature of these amendments, particularly the use of the HS as the standard for classifying and coding goods of specific importance to food security and early warning data falling within the ambit of the Food Security Information for Action Programme of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). In the same vein, certain amendments would create additional subheadings for the identification of chemicals and pesticides controlled under the Rotterdam Convention and ozone depleting substances controlled under the Montreal Protocol.

Other amendments to the HS resulted from changes in international trade patterns. In this regard, the HS would be simplified by the deletion of more than 40 headings or subheadings in the nomenclature due to their low volume of trade. In addition, for purposes of adapting the HS to current trade practices, certain important products will be separately identified in either existing or new headings. Where possible, advances in technology are also reflected in the amendments. Finally, amendments to clarify texts to ensure uniform application of the HS were also adopted.

Once approved by the WCO Council, all amendments, except those for which an objection has been timely notified to the WCO Secretariat, will enter into force for all Contracting Parties to the HS Convention on 1 January 2012.