

Annex 3

Annex on Simplification and Harmonisation of Trade Documentation and Procedures

Under Article 14 of the Agreement

Article 1 Definitions

"Document" means paper and or other medium designed to carry and actually carrying data or information, and includes magnetic tapes and risks, and microfilm;

"Trade facilitation" means the coordination and rationalisation of trade procedures and documents relating to the movement of goods in international trade from the place of consignment to the destination; and

"Trade procedures" means activities relating to the collection, presentation, processing and dissemination of data and information concerning all activities constituting international trade.

Article 2 Objective

The objective of this Annex is to promote co-operation among Tripartite Member States in simplifying and harmonising trade documentation and procedures for the purpose of facilitating intra-Tripartite trade.

Article 3 Reduction of Costs of Trade Documentation

Tripartite Member States undertake to reduce the cost of all trade documentation and procedures by:

- (a) aligning intra-Tripartite and international trade documentation on the United Nations Layout Key;
- (b) reducing to a minimum the number of national documents and copies required for intra-community and international trade transactions;
- (c) harmonising the nature of the information to be contained in documents referred to in sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph;
- (d) reducing to a minimum the number of institutions required to handle documents referred to in sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph;
- (e) centralising to the extent possible the issuing and processing of documents required for intra-regional and international trade.

Article 4 Standardisation of Trade Documents and Information

1. Tripartite Member States undertake to use internationally accepted standards, practices and guidelines, as a basis for designing, and standardising their trade documents and the information required to be contained in such documents.
2. Tripartite Member States undertake to encourage and facilitate the use of data processing techniques in processing and transmitting trade data between the various parties and authorities involved in intra-Tripartite and international trade.
3. Tripartite Member States shall review national legislation with a view to ensuring that its provisions allow the implementation of paragraph 2 of this Article. In particular, national legislation shall provide for:
 - (a) other information transmission methods as an alternative to paper based documentary requirements such as magnetic media and tele-transmission;
 - (b) other authentication methods as an alternative to hand-written and other paper-based signatures;
 - (c) the definition of relevant terms by using internationally accepted definitions which take account of data processing media;
 - (d) the possibility of using public telecommunication infrastructure and of developing and using private telecommunication lines, for trade data transmission; and
 - (e) provisions concerning documentary evidence appropriate to modern information technology.
4. The Tripartite Secretariat shall keep Tripartite Member States informed regarding trade facilitation activities, instruments, recommendations and guidelines of other international organisations, particularly of the:
 - (a) UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA);
 - (b) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD);
 - (c) World Customs Organisation (WCO);
 - (d) International Maritime Organisation (IMO);
 - (e) International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO);
 - (f) International Standards Organisation (ISO);
 - (g) International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the International Bureau of Chamber of Commerce (IBCC);
 - (h) International Air Transport Association (IATA);
 - (i) International Chamber of Shipping (ICS);
 - (j) International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA)
 - (k) World Trade Organisation (WTO)

Article 5

Trade Facilitation

Tripartite Member States undertake to initiate trade facilitation programmes aimed at:

- (a) reducing the cost of documents and the volume of paper work required in respect of trade between Tripartite Member States;
- (b) ensuring that the nature and volume of information required in respect of trade within the Community does not adversely affect the economic development of, or trade among, the Member States;
- (c) adopting common standards of trade procedures within the Community where international requirements do not suit the conditions prevailing among Tripartite Member States;
- (d) ensuring adequate coordinating between trade and transport facilitation within the Tripartite Free Trade Area;
- (e) keeping under review the procedures adopted in international trade and transport with a view to simplifying and adopting for use by Tripartite Member States;
- (f) collecting and disseminating information on international development regarding trade facilitation;
- (g) promoting the development and adoption of common solutions to problems in trade facilitation among Tripartite Member States; and
- (h) initiating and promoting the establishment of joint programmes, for the training of personnel engaged in trade facilitation among Member States.

Article 6

Sub-Committee on Customs Cooperation and Trade Facilitation

The Sub-Committee on Customs Cooperation and Trade Facilitation, as provided for under Article 11 of Annex 2, shall be responsible for the implementation of the provisions of this Annex. It shall address matters of trade documentation and procedures, particularly those relating to:

- (a) exportation and importation;
- (b) export and import licensing;
- (c) insurance of goods;
- (d) transit operations;
- (e) international transport and licensing of carriers; and
- (f) statistical control and dissemination of information on trade documents.

Article 7 Regulations

The Tripartite Council shall adopt regulations on Trade Facilitation, for the implementation of the provisions of this Annex.