

Council for Trade in Goods
21 April 1998

Original: English

SRI LANKA - ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW SCHEDULE VI

Request for Extension of Time-Limit

The following communication, dated 18 March 1998, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka.

I refer to your fax of 16 March 1998 on the above subject. I have been instructed by my authorities in Sri Lanka to furnish the following information with regard to its request for extension of time limit for the current waiver which expires on 30 April 1998.

1. Date of original waiver: 8 November 1988¹.
2. Date of submission of documents relevant to the HS implementation: 12 January 1990².
3. Number of extensions and dates when granted: fifteen extensions, as follows: 24/07/89; 16/07/90; 07/12/90; 01/07/91; 04/12/91; 20/07/92; 03/12/92; 19/07/93; 17/01/94; 21/07/94; 09/12/94; 31/08/95; 13/12/95, 18/07/96, 16/07/97 and 22/10/97.
4. Number of countries with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been initiated: four (Australia, European Union, New Zealand and United States).
5. Number of countries with which Article XXVIII negotiations have been concluded: none.
6. Status of outstanding Article XXVIII negotiations as well as a general outline of relevant problems, if any:

Sri Lanka has made an offer to the two countries which had earlier submitted counter proposals in negotiations initiated under Article XXVIII. Sri Lanka has also received a query and a request for clarification from one other country. A response thereto will be submitted after consultations with appropriate authorities. Sri Lanka continues to make every effort to conclude negotiations as soon as possible, but the negotiations are unlikely to be concluded by 30 April 1998.

¹BISD, 35S/22.

²SECRET/HS/26.

7. Outlook for concluding the process:

It is the stated intention of Sri Lanka to conclude Article XXVIII negotiations as soon as possible and practicable given several constraints. A significant inhibiting factor continues to be the drain on both human and financial resources consequent on the current security situation and the imperative of safeguarding the territorial integrity of the country. As stated on earlier occasions, some of the counter proposals from Sri Lanka's trading partners affect areas which are politically sensitive, particularly when the country is experiencing economic hardships. Moreover, the establishment in Sri Lanka of a Commission on Trade and Tariffs responsible for matters concerning anomalies and changes in the tariff structure impinges directly on the negotiations. The report of this Commission on National Tariff Policy is awaited, as without this the negotiations regrettably cannot be progressed at this stage.

In view of the above, Sri Lanka requests a further extension of six months to conclude these negotiations. The Government of Sri Lanka extends its deep appreciation to the countries concerned for their understanding and assures them that Sri Lanka will look forward to finalize these negotiations to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned in the shortest possible time.
