

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE UNITED STATES

The following communication, dated 18 May 2007, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of the United States.

DRAFT TEXT ON EXPEDITED SHIPMENTS

1. In a previous communication (TN/TF/W/15; 1 February 2005) the United States submitted a proposal to "provide specific expedited procedures for express shipments". The following draft text is now submitted for consideration by the Negotiating Group.

Textual Proposal:

Customs Procedures for Expedited Shipments

1. Each Member shall adopt or maintain separate customs procedures for expedited shipments while maintaining customs control and selection. These procedures shall:

- (a) allow for the submission and processing, including through electronic means, of information necessary for the release of an expedited shipment prior to the arrival of the expedited shipment;
- (b) allow for the submission and processing, including through electronic means, of a single manifest covering all goods contained in an expedited shipment;
- (c) to the extent possible, provide for the clearance of expedited shipments with a minimum of documentation;
- (d) provide for the clearance and release of an expedited shipment that has arrived no later than 1 hour after submission of the necessary customs documents;
- (e) apply without regard to weight or customs value;
- (f) allow for the release of expedited shipments before and without prejudice to the final determination of the applicable customs duties, taxes, and fees owed, if, where so required, the importer provides sufficient guarantee in the form of a surety, a deposit, or some other appropriate instrument, covering the ultimate payment of the customs duties, taxes, and fees in connection with the importation of the expedited shipment; and

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- (g) provide that no customs duties or taxes will be assessed on, nor will formal entry documents be required for an expedited shipment valued at US\$200 or less.
2. A Member may require that an operator providing expedited shipments, as a condition of having access to the expedited procedures described in paragraph 1:
- (a) provide adequate infrastructure to allow for the processing of the expedited shipment;
 - (b) submit specific information in advance of the arrival of an expedited shipment; and
 - (c) be assessed fees limited in amount to the approximate cost of services rendered in providing the separate customs procedures in paragraph 1.
3. Nothing in these provisions shall prevent a Member from conducting screenings and examinations where necessary to maintain appropriate border control, including through the use of systems that distinguish between low-risk and high-risk goods.

Definition

Expedited shipments means goods shipped on an expedited basis while being tracked and controlled by an operator, and subject to the expedited customs procedures set forth in paragraph 1.
