

## **WTO Members Adopt Roadmap to Review Implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement**

The WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation on 3 March adopted a roadmap for the first ever review of progress made in implementing the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). Under the Agreement, members committed to review the operation and implementation of the TFA four years from its entry into force, which was on 22 February 2017, and periodically thereafter.

Under the roadmap, members will submit proposals for consideration in the review, which will then be discussed at the margins of the Committee's formal meetings throughout the year. The timetable also includes discussions of a draft factual report that will be prepared by the WTO Secretariat. In the context of the review, the Committee discussed a proposal from the United States to update the agenda of future Committee meetings to reflect TFA timelines, including notification deadlines that have already passed.

The current rate of implementation of TFA commitments stood at 69.7 per cent for the entire WTO membership as of 3 March according to the update the Secretariat provided to the Committee at the meeting. Broken down by level of development, this equates to a 100 per cent rate of implementation by developed members, 70.3% per cent among developing members and 35.9 per cent among least developed countries (LDCs). Members considered 17 notifications received since the last Committee meeting in January 2021. The Committee did not reach consensus regarding three requests seeking an extension of implementation dates. The Chair noted that members, nevertheless, had expressed openness to discuss implementation delays to come to an understanding for future situations.

Members also discussed again the issue of trade facilitation in light of the COVID-19 crisis. The communication supporting the timely and efficient release of global goods through the accelerated implementation of the TFA drew six more co-signatories: Canada, Korea, Mexico, Singapore, Thailand and Turkey. A proposal from the European Union for the Secretariat to compile information on COVID-19 related responses that members and observers have provided the Committee so far remained under consideration.

The Committee heard presentations and updates from Brazil, the World Customs Organization, the UN Conference on Trade and Development and the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility on their respective work on trade facilitation.

Source: World Trade Scanner