

Revitalizing the Harmonized System

What is needed for a 21st Century Harmonized System?

Day 1 – Preliminary Agenda	
9:00 – 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 10:30	Opening Session Opening Address Keynote Speakers
	Break
11:00 – 13:00	Panel One: Is the HS still fit for purpose? Moderator: Speaker 1: The HS and Customs Focusing on the primary purposes of the HS, the classification of goods for trade and the application of duties, we will look at the range of uses of the HS within Customs. How effectively is it working in supporting trade and revenue policies? Is it sufficiently usable in relation to Customs enforcement and compliance or does it need improvement? Speaker 2: The changing face of trade and the HS Changes over recent decades are many, including, among others: the emergence of global value chains and trade in intermediates; the rise of SMEs; internet enabled personal trading; increasing integration or multi-purposing of goods; the prevalence of technical enhancement, such as adding connectivity, of goods; and the rapid product development cycle. Given the changing nature of trade, is the HS still representative of the reality and sufficiently robust? Speaker 3: Trade negotiations The use of the HS in formulating trade agreements, whether multilateral or Free Trade Agreements, is extensive and poses some interesting challenges. Maintaining the correlation between negotiated coverage and actual coverage can be difficult with the current review cycles of the HS. Even without changes, a gap between the intention and reality can still occur as the evolution or alteration of goods causes shifts in classification. This can flow on to affect Rules of Origin based on Change to Tariff Classification rules. Another challenge is found when negotiating agreements based on criterion not easily fitted into the current structure of the HS, for example environmental goods. So what is the best way forward for the HS as a trade negotiating tool? Speaker 4: Health, environmental and public security challenges for the HS Global problems are increasingly calling for global solutions. Trade in goods is a concern in implementing many of these global policies: promoting or facilitating trade in some goods and controlling or monitoring trade in others. To what level is the HS meeting this need? Speaker 5: The HS and Data Cutting across all uses, is the question of data quality. Is the HS providing data with sufficient consistency, credibility and integrity? Are there gaps in trade in goods data where there is a need not being met by the HS currently? Questions and discussion

	Lunch
14.30 - 16:00	<p>Panel Two: Finding the pain points - what are the problems?</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Speaker 1: Simplicity and user-friendliness – are people “getting it right?”</p> <p>What do we know about the accuracy of classification in practice? Are we seeing high error rates? Do different user groups find the work involved in classification manageable? Are there particular areas of the HS that cause particularly high levels of classification problems?</p> <p>Speaker 2: Structural soundness and defining classes</p> <p>How well do the structural aspects work, including the divisions into Sections and Chapters, the placement of Notes, the layout and the level of depth (the number of digits)?</p> <p>With this, do the divisions and their criteria, which were largely defined in the first half of last century, still work? Goods have changed: ‘nutraceuticals’, multifunctional appliances, and electronics and communication devices built in to almost anything. Do we need to look at new classes?</p> <p>Speaker 3: Underlying Concepts – Shared Understanding?</p> <p>Two of the major underlying concepts of the HS, essential character and sets, have posed problems in achieving consistent understanding and application.</p> <p>Do they need better definitions? Or are there other ways to approach the types of goods these seek to address?</p> <p>Speaker 4: Decoding the HS – the Problems of Language</p> <p>How does language impact on usability and are there potential improvements to be made? Is there a proper fit between the descriptions of goods in the HS versus ‘real world’ terminology? Do we need to address how we deal with the legal definitions of words and phrases, including their translation? Are the Explanatory Notes sufficiently explanatory?</p> <p>Questions and discussion</p>
	Break
16:20 - 18:00	<p>Plenary Forum: Defining the ideal nomenclature (1st of 2 forums)</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>What would an ideal HS look like?</p> <p>What features or capabilities do we want to keep or create?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HS system must be able to ... (the non-negotiable requirements) • It would be highly desirable if the HS could ... (what are our high priorities for additional features or capabilities?) • We would like to be able to ... (useful extra features or capabilities) <p>What must be avoided or removed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HS system must not ... • There must be measures to avoid or reduce ... • Where possible, the HS should not ... <p>In this first session, participants are invited to place any and all ideas on the table. The outcomes of this session will be used as the basis for the second plenary forum and the resulting Conference Recommendations.</p>

Day 2 – Preliminary Agenda	
9:00 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 10:30	Day 2 Opening Session Opening Address Keynote Speakers
	Break
11:00 - 13:00	<p>Panel Three – What should happen?</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Speaker 1: Impacts and Opportunities To introduce this session, this speaker will ask us to pause and look at the impacts and costs as well as the potential benefits.</p> <p>Speaker 2: Global system – global focus The HS is global and a multiuser, multipurpose system. A look back at the aims and goals of the original development and how we can keep the identity of a Customs Nomenclature that looks outwards to supporting the needs of the trade community and trade policy.</p> <p>Discussion on future timeline and working mechanisms</p>
	Lunch
14:30 - 16:00	<p>Plenary Forum: Defining the ideal nomenclature (2nd of 2 forums)</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Building from the first day forum, we refine WHAT we want from the HS system, building in prioritisation, adding the WHY and WHO to our wish list and use the outcomes of the morning to help decide HOW we can proceed from here.</p> <p>We will give form to the Conference Recommendations on the main points and conclusions that emerged during our shared exploration of this issue.</p>
	Break
16:30 - 18:00	Closing remarks and presentation of the Conference Recommendations