

F. No.297/07/2015-CX.9
Govt. of India
Ministry of Finance
Department of Revenue
(Central Board of Excise and Customs)

New Delhi, the 28th October, 2016

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Please find enclosed herewith a press release issued by Central Board of Excise and Customs for taking necessary action.

Encls: As above

Sd-
(HEMAMBIKA R, PRIYA)
Commissioner Co-ord.
[CBEC]
Phone No. 011- 2309 2038

Sh. D.S. Malik,
ADG (M&C)
Ministry of Finance.
North Block, New Delhi.

PRESS NOTE

First Meeting of

National Committee on Trade Facilitation(NCTF)

Pursuant to the establishment of the National Committee on Trade Facilitation vide order dated 11th August, 2016, its first meeting was held on 28th October, 2016 at the North Block, New Delhi. NCTF is a mandatory requirement under Article 23.2 of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation. Its Secretariat is housed in CBEC.

The meeting was chaired by the Cabinet Secretary Mr.P.K. Sinha and attended by all the 24 members of the NCTF, which included Secretaries of various Ministries/Departments like Revenue, Commerce, Home, Shipping, Civil Aviation, Textiles, as well as Industry Associations like FICCI, CII, FIEO, etc. The meeting started with a welcome address by Shri Najib Shah, Chairman CBEC who said that TFA on Customs side is as important as GST in Indirect tax reform.

The Commerce Secretary, Ms. RitaTeaotia in her address threw light on how India has engaged itself with the global developments on the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA) and ratified it earlier this year. She elaborated upon the key objective of TFA as being that of reducing the cost of doing business. While many initiatives have been spearheaded in this area by various Departments, the NCTF will now become an overarching monitoring body for same. She informed that the Department of Commerce has already got a baseline study done by the Centre for WTO Studies about the Gap Analysis status in India viz a viz the TFA. She emphasized about the need for inter ministerial co-ordination which was seen as being crucial for the successful working of the NCTF.

The Industry Representatives complimented the Government on the initiative to establish the NCTF with both public-private partnership.. They voiced their support to Government initiatives in implementing the TFA .They also expressed the need for Government's policy initiatives in facilitating trade to percolate down at the ground level for any meaningful change to occur.

The Revenue Secretary, Mr. Hasmukh Adhia spoke about the need to do away with the multiplicity of Committees looking at trade facilitation at various levels. He suggested that the NCTF which was now the high level national body for same could subsume other such committees and become a uniform voice on these issues.

The Cabinet Secretary and the Chairman of the NCTF, Mr.P.K.Sinha in his key note address stressed the need to continuously move towards higher standards of excellence so that the trade eco system becomes more growth oriented. He emphasized that since the TFA may become a binding Agreement shortly, India had to be in a state of readiness, especially for the Category 'A' commitments. He summed up the significant areas of TFA as simplification of procedures, reduction in

time and cost, augmentation of infrastructure and greater use of technology. He also directed that the Steering Committee, working under NCTF, will be co-chaired by the Revenue Secretary and the Commerce Secretary. He decided that in the initial phase the NCTF and the Steering Committee may meet more frequently to firm up the contours of TFA implementation plan. It was decided that the next meeting of the NCTF will take place in December and the Steering Committee will meet twice before that to come up with specific goals for TFA implementation.

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