

Report of
The 3rd Customs Officials Meeting of D-8 PTA
virtually hosted by
Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
24 May 2022, Dhaka
11.00 hrs (Istanbul time)

The Ministry of Commerce of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh virtually hosted the 3rd Customs Officials Meeting of the Preferential Trade Agreement among the D-8 Member States on 24 May 2022. Delegates from the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkiye attended the meeting. The list of participants is enclosed in **Annex I**.

Agenda Item - 1: Welcoming Remarks

The Chair and Head of Delegation of Bangladesh, Mr. Md. Khairul Kabir, delivered welcoming remarks.

Agenda Item - 2: Opening Remarks

The D-8 Secretary-General, Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, delivered opening remarks, which is enclosed as **Annex-II**.

Agenda Item - 3: Consideration and Adoption of the Draft Agenda

The Meeting considered and adopted the draft agenda as presented. The adopted agenda is enclosed as **Annex-III**.

Agenda Item - 4: Statement by Heads of Delegation

The Heads of Delegation of the Member States delivered their country statements reflecting their current status of implementation of the D-8 PTA.

Bangladesh: The esteemed delegation of Bangladesh informed the meeting that Bangladesh has completed necessary internal procedures for the implementation of the D-8 PTA. He added that Bangladesh would require two more months to complete other pending formalities to provide necessary notifications and share the specimen copy Certificate of Origin. Bangladesh also expressed its commitment to share the specimen signatures and customs stamps with the Secretariat, within a period of 3 months.

Egypt: The esteemed delegation from Egypt reaffirmed the commitment of Egypt to the PTA and informed the meeting that Egypt will start the procedure of ratification of the D-8 PTA as soon as the protocol on Dispute Settlement Mechanism is adopted by the Supervisory

Committee as well as Trade Ministers' Council. The delegation added that Egypt will complete other procedures for the full implementation of the agreement accordingly.

Indonesia: The esteemed delegation from Indonesia updated the meeting that Indonesia is in the process of completing the domestic procedures to issue necessary notifications for the full implementation of the PTA, stressing that Government was also working on the specimen copy of Certificate of Origin. He assured that the Secretariat will be notified as soon as all the procedures are completed.

Iran: Iran informed the meeting that they have already provided necessary notifications and are ready to coordinate with the Secretariat with regard to other pending issues, if any. They have also agreed to update the specimen signatures and customs stamps submitted earlier.

Malaysia: Malaysia reassured the meeting that they have provided necessary notifications and that they are ready to cooperate with the Secretariat for any issues that need to be updated.

Nigeria: The esteemed delegate of Nigeria informed the meeting about the delay in their process of completing necessary internal procedures for full implementation but assured that they will communicate with the Secretariat, in this regard, at the earliest convenience.

Pakistan: The esteemed delegate from Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to implement the PTA. They stated that they have some pending internal issues to resolve after which the necessary notifications would be provided to the Secretariat. They requested for more time before the specimen copy of Certificates of Origin could be issued. However, they assured that the specimen signatures and stamps submitted previously would be updated at the earliest convenience.

Turkey: The esteemed delegate from Turkey informed the meeting that Turkey is fully implementing the D-8 PTA. They urged member states who are yet to implement to complete their necessary internal procedures to make the agreement operational.

Agenda-5: Review of the current status of implementation by the Member States

Under this agenda item, the meeting discussed the checklist item reflecting the status of implementation of the Member States that is enclosed as **Annex-IV**. The esteemed delegation from Pakistan asked for further clarification regarding the notification procedure of checklist item-1 (Notification regarding Rules of Origin and Operational Certification procedures and offer lists). They also sought clarification relating to the Specimen copy of 'D-8 Certificate of Origin' and 'Application for D-8 Certificate of Origin' (attached as **Annex-V**). The Secretariat shared the gazette notification of Malaysia (**Annex-VI**) and a specimen copy of Certificate of Origin of Nigeria (**Annex-VII**) in the meeting to clarify these issues. The Secretariat further

informed the meeting that notifications for implementation of the PTA differ from country to country. Therefore, Pakistan was advised to follow the same procedures that have been followed for the other regional trade agreements.

The Meeting decided that by the end of 31 August 2022 (within a deadline of 3 months) all Member states would have completed their respective pending internal procedures, if any, relating to the notifications regarding Rules of Origin, Certifications procedures and Offer List; sharing specimen copy of CoO and application for D-8 CoO; updating specimen signatures and customs stamps.

Agenda Item -6: Transposition of Offer Lists in the latest HS line

The meeting discussed the transposition of Offer Lists provided by the contracting members into the latest HS line of 2022. Six Contracting Members previously submitted their Offer Lists in transposed HS line of 2012 whereas Bangladesh submitted their Offer List in transposed HS line of 2017 in May 2021. Some of the member countries informed the meeting that they have already started using the HS code of 2022. The meeting agreed that all the contracting members would transpose their Offer Lists into the HS line of 2022 and provide necessary notifications in this regard by the end of August 2022 (within a deadline of 3 months).

Agenda Item -7: Internal capacity building at the national level

The meeting underscored the need for internal capacity building at the national level and training of relevant Customs Officials on the provision of the D-8 PTA and Customs Agreement, as well as internal capacity building linked to the implementation of RoO.

The Secretariat notified the meeting that it has approached the World Customs Organization (WCO) to arrange a tailored training program for the customs officials of the D-8 Member States and that a WCO's training program which was to hold in Turkey from 6-10 June, 2022 was postponed due to the unavailability of WCO experts. The Secretariat expressed its gratitude to the Republic of Turkey for agreeing to host the WCO training program and informed the meeting that a new date will be announced soon for this all-important Workshop. The Secretariat also approached the World Trade Organization for possible collaboration in the area of capacity building.

Member States emphasized the significance of domestic training and the capacity-building measures arranged either bilaterally or multilaterally. They expressed their willingness to share their expertise and knowledge with other member states.

The meeting welcomed the idea of using WCO Regional Training Centers (RTC) in Iran and Indonesia for capacity building of the relevant customs officials of the member states. Indonesia stated its willingness to share their knowledge and experience with other member states. Egypt proposed holding training/workshop that combines both the department responsible for the

agreement as well as the customs authorities. The Chair stressed that arrangements should be made to hold a customized training on the D-8 rules of origin and Operational certification procedures, as it demands common but customized technical practices among the member states.

Agenda Item -8: Up to date designation of contact office/focal points

The Secretariat briefed the meeting about the difficulties it faced in past years to reach the concerned officials of the Member States to follow up the implementation process due to the unavailability of designated focal points. The Chair asked the Member States to provide the details of the designated focal points (Name, Designation, Office, Email and Contact) upon receiving the Note Verbale from the Secretariat at the earliest convenience.

Agenda Item- 9: Determination of implementation date for the D-8 PTA

Under this agenda, the Secretariat informed the meeting that the current chair, the People's Republic of Bangladesh is expected to host the 7th Supervisory Committee Meeting and the 3rd Trade Ministers Council tentatively in the last quarter of this year. In this context, the Secretariat requested the meeting to set an effective and implementable cut-off date to finish all the pending internal procedures, before the next 7th Supervisory Committee Meeting and the 3rd Trade Ministerial Meeting. After an extensive discussion, and in view of the deadline of 31 August 2022, for the completion of all pending necessary internal procedures by the contracting members, the meeting agreed to set a deadline of 5 months from now for the full implementation and operationalization of the D-8 PTA, which is 31 October 2022.

Agenda Item -10: Any Other Business

Under this agenda item, Indonesia proposed to discuss the following technical issues:

- Importation by Installment Mechanism (Article 8 of Operational Certification Procedures)
- Specimen of D-8 Certificate of Origin
- HS Transposition in other Contracting Members of D-8 PTA
- Implementation of Prohibition (Article 14 of Rules of Origin)
- Electronic Certificate of Origin (E-CoO)

Indonesia presented its proposal (concept note is attached as **Annex-VIII**) and requested for opinion from the other Member States. The Chair opined that those technical issues are equally valid for all Member States. In the same view, the Secretariat mentioned that clarification regarding the above issues will facilitate the application of common regulations by the customs authorities of the Member States. The Secretariat mentioned that any amendments to the agreed documents, including the change in the format of the D-8 Certificates of Origin, shall require another round of ratification by the Member States which may further delay the implementation of the PTA. Consequently, the Secretariat suggested that amendment in the agreed document may be discussed after the implementation of the PTA.

After noting the opinions of all member States, the meeting decided that the Secretariat should further circulate the concept note to all Member States, while Member countries should communicate their comments/feedback by no later than 31 August 2022.

Agenda Item -11: Date & venue of the next Customs Officials Meeting

The Meeting exchanged views on the date and venue of the next customs officials meeting. The date and venue of the 4th Customs Officials Meeting will be shared by the Secretariat in due course.

Agenda Item -12: Adoption of the Meeting Report

The meeting decided that the Secretariat would prepare the meeting report in coordination with the host country and circulate the draft report for the comments/feedback from the member states at the earliest convenience. Upon receiving the comments/feedback from the member states, the Secretariat will circulate the final report with all necessary annexures.

Agenda Item -13: Closing Remarks

In Closing Remarks, the Chair expressed his profound gratitude and appreciation to the esteemed delegates from the member states for their active participation and fruitful discussion. He also commended the constructive outcome of the deliberations.

The Director-II Ms. Rasha Hamdy, on behalf of the D-8 Secretariat, conveyed profound gratitude to the Ministry of Commerce of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for hosting the meeting and warmly thanked Mr. Md. Khairul Kabir for his competent chairing. The Meeting also appreciated the Secretariat for its valuable work.