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STATEMENT BY ARMENIA AT PART II OF THE 18th MEETING OF THE OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

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Promoting good governance at border crossings, improving the security of land transportation and facilitating international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region

Plenary Session III: Panel discussion on the role of the OSCE in promoting good governance in international transportation by road and rail in the OSCE region

Prospects for improving customs controls and procedures in the Republic of Armenia

The customs service in the Republic of Armenia plays a key role in ensuring the development of the country's economic security and stimulating external trade and carrying out controls.

The Armenian customs administration has elaborated a long-term strategic programme for 2009 to 2012 to deal with the above-mentioned tasks. The programme is based on seven principles for enhancing the efficiency of the customs administration and improving customs controls and procedures by carrying out appropriate reforms of customs legislation. All of the principles for improving the customs administration selected by us have the single aim of simplifying customs procedures and the control of goods and vehicles passing through the customs border.

We attach great importance with regard to customs procedures to the "one window" principle, which is also part of our strategic programme. Initial steps have already been undertaken in this regard. The new Trade World Manager (TWM) automated system has greatly simplified and facilitated customs procedures, in particular the selection of the type of control, specifying green, yellow and red lanes, depending on the risk. The customs declaration contains different columns for this purpose, so that the customs inspector and the declarant do not have to communicate. The declaration also shows the customs duty and its payment. These measures reduce the time required for customs formalities and, most importantly, minimize the risk of corruption.

Amendments have been made to customs legislation and procedures have also been simplified so as to minimize this risk of corruption. The possibility for electronic customs declarations has been introduced and developed in addition.

Great attention is being paid to establishing customs control areas that are well equipped technically and to developing a standard electronic communications system between customs authorities.

These procedures also include preventive measures to improve the collection of customs duty and reduce the time required for customs formalities. The setting up of an electronic network shared by customs authorities and export companies has resulted in fundamental changes in the declaration procedure. I should like to stress, however, that the speed at which the reform takes place depends directly on the provision of the financial resources for the measures required to modernize the customs administration.

The Public Revenue Department is endeavouring to the best of its ability to implement the programme for automating customs control and procedures, based essentially on the “one window” principle.

At the same time, great attention is being paid to transparency of the reform process and to increasing public awareness, since the application of the improved legislation cannot be effectively guaranteed unless declarants are well versed in the law and aware of their rights. In this regard, the customs service attaches importance to the creation of an institute of customs brokers, which has seen significant improvements in the last two years.

The priority reform tasks are thus the creation of the above-mentioned technical framework and the elaboration of customs legislation in line with the new potential created through technical improvements in customs control. At the same time, the administrative reforms should aim at ensuring full application of the improved legislation.

We attach great importance to the introduction of the “one window” system and are willing to continue our collaboration with the customs administrations of other countries with regard both to implementation and to future reforms.