

AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
AND
THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC
REGARDING MUTUAL ASSISTANCE
BETWEEN THEIR CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS

PREAMBLE

The Republic of South Africa and the Argentine Republic (hereinafter jointly referred to as the “Parties” and in the singular as a “Party”);

CONSIDERING the importance of ensuring the accurate assessment of customs duties, taxes and other charges collected on the importation or exportation of goods and a proper implementation of provisions of prohibition, restriction and control;

CONSIDERING that offences against customs law are detrimental to the economic, fiscal and social interests of their respective countries;

CONSIDERING that trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances constitutes a danger to public health and to society;

RECOGNISING the increased global concern for the security and facilitation of the international trade supply chain and the Customs Co-operation Council’s Resolution of June 2002 to that effect;

RECOGNISING the need for international co-operation in matters related to the application and enforcement of their customs law;

CONVINCED that efforts to prevent offences against customs law and to achieve greater accuracy in the collection of customs duties would be made more effective by close co-operation between their customs administrations;

HAVING REGARD to international Conventions containing prohibitions, restrictions and measures of control in respect of specific goods;

HAVING regard to the Recommendation on Mutual Administrative Assistance and the Declaration on the Improvement of Customs Co-operation and Mutual Administrative Assistance (the Cyprus Declaration), adopted in December 1953 and June 2000, respectively, by the Customs Co-operation Council, now known as the World Customs Organization;

HEREBY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

ARTICLE 1

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Agreement, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) “customs administration” means, for the Argentine Republic., the Federal Administration of Public Revenues and for the Republic of South Africa, the South African Revenue Service;
- (b) “customs law” means all the legal and administrative provisions applicable or enforceable by the customs administrations in connection with the importation, exportation, transshipment, transit, storage, and movement of goods, including:
 - (i) the collection, guaranteeing or repayment of duties, taxes and other charges;
 - (ii) action in relation to measures of prohibition, restriction or control;
 - (iii) action in relation to illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances;
- (c) “customs offence” means any violation or attempted violation of customs law;
- (d) “information” means any data, whether or not processed or analysed, any documents, reports, and other communications in any format, including electronic, or certified or authenticated copies thereof;
- (e) “international trade supply chain” shall mean all processes involved in the cross-border movement of goods from the place of origin to the place of final destination;
- (f) “official” means any customs officer or other government agent designated by either customs administration;
- (g) “person” means both natural and legal persons;
- (h) “requested administration” means the customs administration from which assistance is requested;
- (i) “requested Party” means the Party whose customs administration is requested to provide assistance;
- (j) “requesting administration” means the customs administration which requests assistance; and
- (k) “requesting Party” means the Party whose customs administration requests assistance.

ARTICLE 2

SCOPE OF THE AGREEMENT

1. The Parties shall, through their customs administrations and in accordance with the provisions set out in this Agreement, afford each other mutual assistance:
 - (a) to ensure that the customs law in force in their respective territories is properly observed;
 - (b) to prevent, investigate and combat customs offences;
 - (c) in cases concerning the delivery of documents regarding the application of customs law;
 - (d) to facilitate the simplification and harmonisation of their customs procedures; and
 - (e) to ensure the security of the international trade supply chain.
2. Assistance within the framework of the Agreement shall be rendered in accordance with the domestic law and administrative provisions in force in the country of the requested Party and within the competence and available resources of its customs administration.
3. The Agreement does not provide for the recovery in the territory of the requested Party of customs duties, taxes and any other charges incurred in the territory of the requesting Party.
4. The Agreement is intended solely for mutual assistance between the Parties. The provisions of the Agreement shall not give rise to a right on the part of any private person to obtain, suppress or exclude any evidence or to impede the execution of a request.

ARTICLE 3

COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION

1. Each customs administration shall supply to the other, either on request or on its own initiative, all available information that may help to ensure proper application of customs law and the prevention, investigation and combating of customs offences relating to the:
 - (a) recovery, by the customs administrations, of customs rights and duties as well as the correct determination of customs value of the goods and their tariff classification;

- (b) application of the rules concerning the origin of goods; and
 - (c) prevention and repression of customs offences and illicit traffic of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- 2. In serious cases that could involve substantial damage to the economy, public health, public security or any other vital interest of a Party, the customs administration of the other Party shall, wherever possible, supply such information on its own initiative without delay.
- 3. In the case of a request, if the customs administration of the requested Party does not have the information asked for, it shall make enquiries to obtain that information in accordance with the provisions of its customs law.
- 4. Upon request, the requested administration shall supply to the requesting administration information concerning instances where the latter has reason to doubt the information supplied by the person concerned in the customs matter.
- 5. Each customs administration shall supply to the other, either on request or on its own initiative, with any available information relating to:
 - (a) goods that are likely to be the subject of illegal trafficking between their respective territories;
 - (b) activities that are or appear to be a violation or attempted violation of customs law within the territory of the other Party;
 - (c) means of transport in respect of which there are reasonable grounds for believing that they have been, are, or may be used in violation or attempted violation of customs law;
 - (d) persons known to have committed a customs offence or suspected of being about to commit a customs offence.
- 6. Upon request, the requested administration shall supply to the requesting administration information concerning the following matters:
 - (a) whether goods that are imported into the territory of the requesting Party have been lawfully exported from the territory of the requested Party;
 - (b) whether goods that are exported from the territory of the requesting Party have been lawfully imported into the territory of the requested Party and the nature of the customs procedure, if any, under which the goods have been placed.

7. Each customs administration shall, on its own initiative, or upon request, supply to the other customs administration reports, records of evidence, or certified copies of documents giving all available information on transactions, completed or planned, that constitute or appear to constitute an offence against the customs law of that Party. All relevant information for the interpretation or utilisation of the material shall be supplied at the same time.
8. The documents provided for in the Agreement may be replaced by computerised information produced in any form for the same purpose.

ARTICLE 4

NOTIFICATION

On request, the requested administration shall notify a person, residing or established in the territory of the requested Party, of any formal decision concerning that person taken by the requesting administration, in application of customs law.

ARTICLE 5

AUTOMATIC EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

The customs administrations may, by mutual arrangement in accordance with Article 15, exchange any information covered by this Agreement on an automatic basis.

ARTICLE 6

ADVANCED EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

The customs administrations may, by mutual arrangement in accordance with Article 15, exchange specific information in advance of the arrival of consignments in the territory of the other Party.

ARTICLE 7

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

1. On request, the requested administration shall provide all information about its customs law and procedures that are relevant to enquiries relating to a customs offence.
2. Either customs administration shall on request or on its own initiative communicate any available information relating to:

- (a) new customs law enforcement techniques having proved their effectiveness;
 - (b) new trends, means or methods of committing customs offences;
 - (c) goods known to be the subject of customs offences, as well as transport and storage methods used in respect of those goods;
3. The customs administrations shall provide each other with technical assistance in customs matters including:
- (a) exchange of customs officials when mutually beneficial for the purposes of advancing the understanding of each other's techniques;
 - (b) training and assistance in developing specialised skills of customs officials;
 - (c) exchange of experts knowledgeable about customs matters;
 - (d) exchange of professional, scientific and technical data relating to customs law and procedures;
 - (e) information on the computerisation of customs procedures including e-customs and EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) applications;
 - (f) trade facilitation measures and simplification of customs procedures; and
 - (g) any other data that can assist customs administrations with risk management for control and facilitation purposes.
4. Each customs administration shall share with the other information on its work procedures for the purposes of advancing their understanding of each other's procedures and techniques.

ARTICLE 8

SURVEILLANCE OF PERSONS, GOODS, PLACES AND MEANS OF TRANSPORT

1. Each customs administration shall on its own initiative or on written request from the other customs administration, subject to the domestic law in force in its country and in accordance with its administrative practices, maintain special surveillance over:

- (a) the movements and, in particular, the entry into and exit from its territory, of persons suspected of having occasionally or habitually committed offences against the customs law of the requesting Party;
 - (b) suspect storage or movements of goods and means of payment notified by the requesting administration as giving rise to substantial illicit trade in the territory of the requesting Party;
 - (c) places used for storing goods that may be used in connection with substantial illicit trade in the territory of the requesting Party;
 - (d) means of transport that are suspected of being used in contravening customs law in the territory of the requesting Party; and
 - (e) operations that can be linked to the illicit traffic of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances or to the illicit traffic of archaeological or paleontological pieces, products or by-products and of archaeological or paleontological collections .
2. The results of such surveillance shall be communicated to the other customs administration as soon as is reasonably possible.

ARTICLE 9

EXPERTS AND WITNESSES

On request, the requested administration may authorize its officials to appear before a court or tribunal in the territory of the other Party as experts or witnesses in the matter of a customs offence.

ARTICLE 10

COMMUNICATION OF REQUESTS

1. Requests for assistance under this Agreement shall be exchanged directly between the customs administrations of the Parties.
2. Requests for assistance shall be made in writing or electronically, and shall be accompanied by any information deemed useful to comply with the request. The requested administration may require written confirmation of electronic requests. Where the circumstances so require, requests may be made orally. Such requests shall be confirmed as soon as possible either in writing or, if acceptable to both customs administrations, by electronic means.
3. Requests made pursuant to paragraph 2 of this Article, shall include the following details:

- (a) the name of the requesting administration;
 - (b) the customs matter at issue, type of assistance requested, and reason for the request;
 - (c) a brief description of the case under review and its administrative and legal elements; and
 - (d) the names and addresses of the persons to whom the request relates, if known.
4. Where the requesting administration requests that a certain procedure or methodology be followed, the requested administration shall comply with such a request subject to the domestic law in force in its country and administrative provisions.
5. The information referred to in the Agreement shall be communicated to officials who are specially designated for this purpose by either customs administration. A list of officials so designated shall be supplied to the customs administration of the other Party.

ARTICLE 11

MEANS OF OBTAINING INFORMATION

1. If the requested administration does not have the information requested, it shall in accordance with the domestic law in force in its country and administrative provisions:
- (a) initiate enquiries to obtain that information; or
 - (b) promptly transmit the request to the appropriate agency; or
 - (c) indicate which relevant authorities are concerned.
2. Any enquiry under paragraph 1 of this Article may include the taking of statements from persons from whom information is sought in connection with a customs offence and from witnesses and experts.
3. The requested administration shall communicate the results of such enquiries without delay to the requesting administration.

ARTICLE 12

PRESENCE OF OFFICIALS IN THE TERRITORY OF THE OTHER PARTY

1. Officials specially designated by the requesting administration may, on written request, with the authorisation of the requested administration and subject to conditions the latter may impose, for the purpose of investigating a customs offence:
 - (a) examine in the offices of the requested administration the documents, registers and other relevant data to extract any information in respect of that customs offence;
 - (b) be provided with copies of the documents, registers and other data relevant in respect of that customs offence;
 - (c) be present during an enquiry conducted by the requested administration and relevant to the requesting administration.
2. Where the requested administration considers it useful or necessary for an official of the requesting administration to be present when, pursuant to a request, measures of assistance are carried out, it shall inform the requesting administration accordingly.

ARTICLE 13

ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISITING OFFICIALS

1. When, in the circumstances provided for by this Agreement, officials of the customs administration of either Party are present in the territory of the other Party, they must at all times be able to furnish proof of their official capacity.
2. The officials so designated shall be present in an advisory role only and may not exercise the powers conferred on officials of the requested administration by the domestic law in force in the country of the requested Party. The officials shall, however, for the sole purpose of the enquiry being carried out and in the presence of and through officials of the requested administration, have access to the same premises and same documents as those officials of the requested administration.
3. The officials shall, while there, enjoy the protection accorded to customs officials of the other Party, in accordance with the domestic law in force in the country of the other Party, and be responsible for any offence they might commit. The officials shall not be in uniform and shall not carry arms.

ARTICLE 14

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

1. Any information received under this Agreement shall be used only by the customs administrations and solely for the purposes of the Agreement except in cases where the customs administration supplying the information has authorised its use by other authorities or for other purposes in writing.
2. Any information received under the Agreement shall be treated as confidential and shall at least be accorded protection and confidentiality similar to that accorded to the same kind of information under the domestic law in force in the country of the receiving Party.
3. The customs administration of the receiving Party may, in accordance with the purposes and within the scope of the Agreement, in its records of evidence, reports, and testimonies, and in proceedings and charges brought before the courts, use as evidence information and documents obtained in accordance with the Agreement.

ARTICLE 15

EXEMPTIONS FROM OBLIGATION TO RENDER ASSISTANCE

1. If the requested administration considers that the requested assistance might be prejudicial to public policy, or to the sovereignty, security or other essential interests of that Party, or might in the opinion of that customs administration involve violation of industrial, commercial or professional secrecy, or would be inconsistent with the domestic law in force in its country and administrative provisions, it may refuse to provide assistance or it may provide the assistance only if certain conditions are met.
2. If the requesting administration has requested assistance which it would not itself be able to give if requested by the other customs administration, it shall draw attention to the fact in the request. Compliance with such a request shall be entirely within the discretion of the requested administration.
3. Assistance may be postponed by the requested administration on the ground that it will interfere with an ongoing investigation, prosecution or proceeding. In such a case the requested administration shall consult with the requesting administration to determine if assistance can be given subject to such terms or conditions as the requested administration may require.
4. If assistance is refused, the decision and the reasons for the refusal shall be notified in writing to the requesting administration without delay. The reason for the refusal shall not be necessary when it is due to sovereignty, security and other essential rights of the State.

ARTICLE 16

COSTS

1. Subject to paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Article, each customs administration shall waive all claims for reimbursement of costs incurred in the execution of this Agreement.
2. Expenses and allowances paid to experts and witnesses, as well as costs of translators and interpreters, other than Government employees, shall be borne by the requesting administration.
3. If expenses of a substantial or extraordinary nature are or would be required to execute a request, the Parties shall consult to determine the terms and conditions under which the request shall be executed as well as the manner in which the costs shall be borne.

ARTICLE 17

IMPLEMENTATION AND APPLICATION OF THE AGREEMENT

1. The customs administrations shall enable their officials responsible for the investigation or combating of customs offences to maintain personal and direct relations with each other.
2. The customs administrations of the Parties shall jointly decide on detailed arrangements to facilitate the application of this Agreement.
3. Any difficulties or doubts between the Parties arising from the interpretation or application of the Agreement shall be settled amicably through consultation or negotiation between the Parties.
4. The customs administrations shall meet in order to review the Agreement on request or at the end of five years from the date of its entry into force, unless they notify each other in writing that no such review is necessary.

ARTICLE 18

AMENDMENTS

This Agreement may be amended by mutual consent of the Parties through an Exchange of Notes between the Parties through the diplomatic channel.

ARTICLE 19

TERRITORIAL APPLICATION OF THE AGREEMENT

This Agreement shall apply to the territory of the Argentine Republic and to the territory of the Republic of South Africa.

ARTICLE 20

ENTRY INTO FORCE

The Parties shall notify each other in writing, through the diplomatic channel, of the completion of the constitutional or internal requirements for the entry into force of this Agreement. The Agreement shall enter into force on the first day of the second month following the date of receipt of the later of these notifications.

ARTICLE 21

DURATION AND TERMINATION

1. This Agreement shall remain in force indefinitely but either of the Parties may terminate the Agreement through the diplomatic channel, by giving to the other Party written notice of termination after the expiration of a period of five years from the date of entry into force of the Agreement.
2. The Agreement shall cease to be effective three months after the date of receipt of such notice.
3. Ongoing proceedings at the time of termination shall nonetheless be completed in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto by their respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

DONE at Buenos Aires on this 2nd day of August in the year 2013, in two originals in the Spanish and English languages, both texts being equally authentic.

**FOR THE REPUBLIC OF
SOUTH AFRICA**

**FOR THE
ARGENTINE REPUBLIC**

Entry into force date: 1 December 2013