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GATT MEMBERSHIP RISES TO 110 WITH THE ACCESSION OF DOMINICA

On 20 April 1993, the Commonwealth of Dominica became the 110th contracting party to GATT following a notification by its Government to the Director-General, Mr. Arthur Dunkel. Dominica has acceded under the terms of Article XXVI:5 of the General Agreement.

The country became independent from the United Kingdom in 1978. Since that time it has had full autonomy in the conduct of its external commercial relations and has applied the General Agreement on a de facto basis. Under these circumstances, Dominica needed only to notify the GATT Director-General that it wished to be deemed a contracting party, having met the conditions required by Article XXVI:5(c).

Since the beginning of the year, six countries have acceded to the GATT: Mali in January, Swaziland in February, and Saint Lucia, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Dominica this month. GATT working parties are currently examining the membership applications of Albania, Algeria, Bulgaria, Chinese Taipei, Ecuador, Honduras, Mongolia, Nepal, Panama, Paraguay and Slovenia. There is also a working party on China's status as a contracting party.

Notes to Editors

1. The text of Article XXVI:5(c) of the General Agreement is as follows:

"(c) If any of the customs territories, in respect of which a contracting party has accepted this Agreement, possesses or acquires full autonomy in the conduct of its external commercial relations and of the other matters provided for in this Agreement, such territory shall, upon sponsorship through a declaration by the responsible contracting party establishing the above-mentioned fact, be deemed to be a contracting party."

2. Located in Eastern Caribbean, Dominica is the most northerly of the Windward Islands. The country has a population of 72,000 (1991), and the main industries are agriculture (chief crops: bananas, citrus fruits and coconuts) and tourism. In 1991, Dominica's exports amounted to US\$66 million while imports reached US\$110 million.