

Decision on the Acceptance of and Accession to the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization

Ministers,

Noting that Articles XI and XIV of the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (hereinafter referred to as "WTO Agreement") provide that only contracting parties to the GATT 1947 as of the entry into force of the WTO Agreement for which schedules of concessions and commitments are annexed to GATT 1994 and for which schedules of specific commitments are annexed to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (hereinafter referred to as "GATS") may accept the WTO Agreement;

Noting further that paragraph 5 of the Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations (hereinafter referred to as "Final Act" and "Uruguay Round" respectively) provides that the schedules of participants which are not contracting parties to GATT 1947 as of the date of the Final Act are not definitive and shall be subsequently completed for the purpose of their accession to GATT 1947 and their acceptance of the WTO Agreement;

Having regard to paragraph 1 of the Decision on Measures in Favour of Least-Developed Countries which provides that the least-developed countries shall be given an additional time of one year from 15 April 1994 to submit their schedules as required in Article XI of the WTO Agreement;

Recognizing that certain participants in the Uruguay Round which had applied GATT 1947 on a *de facto* basis and became contracting parties under Article XXVI:5(c) of the GATT 1947 were not in a position to submit schedules to GATT 1994 and the GATS;

Recognizing further that some States or separate customs territories which were not participants in the Uruguay Round may become contracting parties to GATT 1947 before the entry into force of the WTO Agreement and that States or customs territories should be given the opportunity to negotiate schedules to GATT 1994 and the GATS so as to enable them to accept the WTO Agreement;

Taking into account that some States or separate customs territories which cannot complete the process of accession to GATT 1947 before the entry into force of the WTO Agreement or which do not intend to become contracting parties to GATT 1947 may wish to initiate the process of their accession to the WTO before the entry into force of the WTO Agreement;

Recognizing that the WTO Agreement does not distinguish in any way between WTO Members which accepted that Agreement in accordance with its Articles XI and XIV and WTO Members which acceded to it in accordance with its Article XII and wishing to ensure that the procedures for accession of the States and separate customs territories which have not become contracting parties to the GATT 1947 as of the date of entry into force of the WTO Agreement are such as to avoid any unnecessary disadvantage or delay for these States and separate customs territories;

Decide that:

1. (a) Any Signatory of the Final Act
 - to which paragraph 5 of the Final Act applies, or
 - to which paragraph 1 of the Decision on Measures in Favour of Least-Developed Countries applies, or
 - which became a contracting party under Article XXVI:5(c) of the GATT 1947 before 15 April 1994 and was not in a position to establish a schedule to GATT 1994 and the GATS for inclusion in the Final Act, andany State or separate customs territory
 - which becomes a contracting party to the GATT 1947 between 15 April 1994 and the date of entry into force of the WTO Agreementmay submit to the Preparatory Committee for its examination and approval a schedule of concessions and commitments to GATT 1994 and a schedule of specific commitments to the GATS.
- (b) The WTO Agreement shall be open for acceptance in accordance with Article XIV of that Agreement by contracting parties to GATT 1947 the schedules of which have been so submitted and approved before the entry into force of the WTO Agreement.
- (c) The provisions of subparagraphs (a) and (b) of this paragraph shall be without prejudice to the right of the least-developed countries to submit their schedules within one year from 15 April 1994.
2. (a) Any State or separate customs territory may request the Preparatory Committee to propose for approval by the Ministerial Conference of the WTO the terms of its accession to the WTO Agreement in accordance with Article XII of that Agreement. If such a request is made by a State or separate customs territory which is in the process of acceding to GATT 1947, the Preparatory Committee shall, to the extent practicable, examine the request jointly with the Working Party

established by the CONTRACTING PARTIES to GATT 1947 to examine the accession of that State or separate customs territory.

- (b) The Preparatory Committee shall submit to the Ministerial Conference a report on its examination of the request. The report may include a protocol of accession, including a schedule of concessions and commitments to GATT 1994 and a schedule of specific commitments for the GATS, for approval by the Ministerial Conference. The report of the Preparatory Committee shall be taken into account by the Ministerial Conference in its consideration of any application by the State or separate customs territory concerned to accede to the WTO Agreement.