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1 ARTICLE 12 AND APPENDIX 3

1.1 Text of Article 12

Article 12

Panel Procedures

1. Panels shall follow the Working Procedures in Appendix 3 unless the panel decides otherwise after consulting the parties to the dispute.

2. Panel procedures should provide sufficient flexibility so as to ensure high-quality panel reports, while not unduly delaying the panel process.

3. After consulting the parties to the dispute, the panelists shall, as soon as practicable and whenever possible within one week after the composition and terms of reference of the panel have been agreed upon, fix the timetable for the panel process, taking into account the provisions of paragraph 9 of Article 4, if relevant.

4. In determining the timetable for the panel process, the panel shall provide sufficient time for the parties to the dispute to prepare their submissions.

5. Panels should set precise deadlines for written submissions by the parties and the parties should respect those deadlines.

6. Each party to the dispute shall deposit its written submissions with the Secretariat for immediate transmission to the panel and to the other party or parties to the dispute. The complaining party shall submit its first submission in advance of the responding party’s first submission unless the panel decides, in fixing the timetable referred to in paragraph 3 and after consultations with the parties to the dispute, that the parties should submit their first submissions simultaneously. When there are sequential arrangements for the deposit of first submissions, the panel shall establish a firm time-period for receipt of the responding party’s submission. Any subsequent written submissions shall be submitted simultaneously.

7. Where the parties to the dispute have failed to develop a mutually satisfactory solution, the panel shall submit its findings in the form of a written report to the DSB. In such cases, the report of a panel shall set out the findings of fact, the applicability of relevant provisions and the basic rationale behind any findings and recommendations that it makes. Where a settlement of the matter among the parties to the dispute has been found, the report of the panel shall be confined to a brief description of the case and to reporting that a solution has been reached.

8. In order to make the procedures more efficient, the period in which the panel shall conduct its examination, from the date that the composition and terms of reference of the panel have been agreed upon until the date the final report is issued to the parties to the dispute, shall, as a general rule, not exceed six months. In cases of urgency, including those relating to perishable goods, the panel shall aim to issue its report to the parties to the dispute within three months.

9. When the panel considers that it cannot issue its report within six months, or within three months in cases of urgency, it shall inform the DSB in writing of the reasons for the delay together with an estimate of the period within which it will issue its report. In no case should the period from the establishment of the panel to the circulation of the report to the Members exceed nine months.

10. In the context of consultations involving a measure taken by a developing country Member, the parties may agree to extend the periods established in paragraphs 7 and 8 of Article 4. If, after the relevant period has elapsed, the consulting parties cannot agree that the consultations have concluded, the Chairman of the DSB shall decide, after consultation with the parties, whether to extend the relevant period and, if so, for how long. In addition, in examining a complaint against a developing country Member, the panel shall accord sufficient time for the developing country Member to prepare and present its argumentation.
The provisions of paragraph 1 of Article 20 and paragraph 4 of Article 21 are not affected by any action pursuant to this paragraph.

11. Where one or more of the parties is a developing country Member, the panel's report shall explicitly indicate the form in which account has been taken of relevant provisions on differential and more-favourable treatment for developing country Members that form part of the covered agreements which have been raised by the developing country Member in the course of the dispute settlement procedures.

12. The panel may suspend its work at any time at the request of the complaining party for a period not to exceed 12 months. In the event of such a suspension, the time-frames set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 of this Article, paragraph 1 of Article 20, and paragraph 4 of Article 21 shall be extended by the amount of time that the work was suspended. If the work of the panel has been suspended for more than 12 months, the authority for establishment of the panel shall lapse.

1.2 Text of Appendix 3 of the DSU

APPENDIX 3

WORKING PROCEDURES

1. In its proceedings the panel shall follow the relevant provisions of this Understanding. In addition, the following working procedures shall apply.

2. The panel shall meet in closed session. The parties to the dispute, and interested parties, shall be present at the meetings only when invited by the panel to appear before it.

3. The deliberations of the panel and the documents submitted to it shall be kept confidential. Nothing in this Understanding shall preclude a party to a dispute from disclosing statements of its own positions to the public. Members shall treat as confidential information submitted by another Member to the panel which that Member has designated as confidential. Where a party to a dispute submits a confidential version of its written submissions to the panel, it shall also, upon request of a Member, provide a non-confidential summary of the information contained in its submissions that could be disclosed to the public.

4. Before the first substantive meeting of the panel with the parties, the parties to the dispute shall transmit to the panel written submissions in which they present the facts of the case and their arguments.

5. At its first substantive meeting with the parties, the panel shall ask the party which has brought the complaint to present its case. Subsequently, and still at the same meeting, the party against which the complaint has been brought shall be asked to present its point of view.

6. All third parties which have notified their interest in the dispute to the DSB shall be invited in writing to present their views during a session of the first substantive meeting of the panel set aside for that purpose. All such third parties may be present during the entirety of this session.

7. Formal rebuttals shall be made at a second substantive meeting of the panel. The party complained against shall have the right to take the floor first to be followed by the complaining party. The parties shall submit, prior to that meeting, written rebuttals to the panel.

8. The panel may at any time put questions to the parties and ask them for explanations either in the course of a meeting with the parties or in writing.

9. The parties to the dispute and any third party invited to present its views in accordance with Article 10 shall make available to the panel a written version of their oral statements.
10. In the interest of full transparency, the presentations, rebuttals and statements referred to in paragraphs 5 to 9 shall be made in the presence of the parties. Moreover, each party's written submissions, including any comments on the descriptive part of the report and responses to questions put by the panel, shall be made available to the other party or parties.

11. Any additional procedures specific to the panel.

12. Proposed timetable for panel work:

   (a) Receipt of first written submissions of the parties:
       (1) complaining Party: ______  3-6 weeks
       (2) Party complained against: ______  2-3 weeks

   (b) Date, time and place of first substantive meeting with the parties; third party session: ______  1-2 weeks

   (c) Receipt of written rebuttals of the parties: ______  2-3 weeks

   (d) Date, time and place of second substantive meeting with the parties: ______  1-2 weeks

   (e) Issuance of descriptive part of the report to the parties: ______  2-4 weeks

   (f) Receipt of comments by the parties on the descriptive part of the report: ______  2 weeks

   (g) Issuance of the interim report, including the findings and conclusions, to the parties: ______  2-4 weeks

   (h) Deadline for party to request review of part(s) of report: ______  1 week

   (i) Period of review by panel, including possible additional meeting with parties: ______  2 weeks

   (j) Issuance of final report to parties to dispute: ______  2 weeks

   (k) Circulation of the final report to the Members: ______  3 weeks

The above calendar may be changed in the light of unforeseen developments. Additional meetings with the parties shall be scheduled if required.

1.3 General

1.3.1 The panel's margin of discretion with respect procedural issues

1.  In EC – Hormones, the Appellate Body held that panels enjoy a margin of discretion to deal with situations that "are not explicitly regulated":

   "[T]he DSU, and in particular its Appendix 3, leave panels a margin of discretion to deal, always in accordance with due process, with specific situations that may arise in a particular case and that are not explicitly regulated. Within this context, an appellant requesting the Appellate Body to reverse a panel's ruling on matters of procedure must demonstrate the prejudice generated by such legal ruling."

2. In India – Patents (US), the Appellate Body examined the Panel’s decision at the outset of the first substantive meeting - "that all legal claims would be considered if they were made prior to the end of that meeting; and this ruling was accepted by both parties". The Appellate Body, in being called upon to determine whether the Panel had exceeded its terms of reference, stated:

"We do not find this statement ... consistent with the letter and the spirit of the DSU. Although panels enjoy some discretion in establishing their own working procedures, this discretion does not extend to modifying the substantive provisions of the DSU. To be sure, Article 12.1 of the DSU says: 'Panels shall follow the Working Procedures in Appendix 3 unless the panel decides otherwise after consulting the parties to the dispute'. Yet that is all that it says. Nothing in the DSU gives a panel the authority either to disregard or to modify other explicit provisions of the DSU."2

3. The Panel in EC – Tariff Preferences addressed the issue of the joint representation of India, the complaining party and Paraguay, a third party, by the same legal counsel, the Advisory Centre of WTO Law (AWCL). The Panel stated that "flowing from its terms of reference and from the requirement ... pursuant to Article 12 of the DSU, to determine and administer its Working Procedures, the Panel has the inherent authority – and, indeed, the duty – to manage the proceeding in a manner guaranteeing due process to all parties involved in the proceeding and to maintain the integrity of the dispute settlement system."3

1.3.2 Due process

1.3.2.1 General

4. In Thailand – Cigarettes (Philippines), the Appellate Body discussed the role of due process in WTO dispute settlement, recalling some of its prior jurisprudence:

"We note that Thailand couches its claim under Article 11 of the DSU as a 'due process claim'. Due process is a fundamental principle of WTO dispute settlement.4 It informs and finds reflection in the provisions of the DSU.5 In conducting an objective assessment of a matter, a panel is 'bound to ensure that due process is respected'.6 Due process is intrinsically connected to notions of fairness, impartiality, and the rights of parties to be heard and to be afforded an adequate opportunity to pursue their claims, make out their defences, and establish the facts in the context of proceedings conducted in a balanced and orderly manner, according to established rules. The protection of due process is thus a crucial means of guaranteeing the legitimacy and efficacy of a rules-based system of adjudication."7

1.3.2.2 Standard panel working procedures as a tool to ensure due process

5. In EC – Bananas III, the Appellate Body indicated that issues including whether or not a claim had been specified in the request for establishment of a panel "could be decided early in panel proceedings, without causing prejudice or unfairness to any party or third party, if panels had detailed, standard working procedures that allowed, inter alia, for preliminary rulings”.8

6. In India – Patents (US), the Appellate Body also pointed to the relevance of having standard panel working procedures that provide for appropriate factual discovery at an early stage

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2 Appellate Body Report, India – Patents (US), para. 92.
4 (footnote original) The Appellate Body has held that "the protection of due process is an essential feature of a rules-based system of adjudication, such as that established under the DSU", and that "due process is fundamental to ensuring a fair and orderly conduct of dispute settlement proceedings". (Appellate Body Reports, Canada – Continued Suspension / US – Continued Suspension, para. 433; and Appellate Body Report, Thailand – H-Beams, para. 88, respectively. See also Appellate Body Report, Chile – Price Band System, para. 176).
7 Appellate Body Report, Thailand – Cigarettes (Philippines), para. 147.
in order to assist the requirements of due process, stating that "[i]t is worth noting that, with respect to fact-finding, the dictates of due process could better be served if panels had standard working procedures that provided for appropriate factual discovery at an early stage in panel proceedings." 9

7. In *Thailand – Cigarettes (Philippines)*, the Appellate Body returned to the issue of due process and panel working procedures:

"Panel working procedures should both embody and reinforce due process. Article 12.1 of the DSU states that panels 'shall' follow the working procedures set out in Appendix 3 to the DSU 'unless the panel decides otherwise after consulting the parties to the dispute'. The working procedures adopted by a panel must conform to the DSU. 10 As the Appellate Body has previously observed, the use by panels of detailed, standardized working procedures promotes fairness and the protection of due process. 11 The inclusion by a panel in its working procedures of a rule that is inconsistent with due process would be a clear sign that such panel has failed to ensure the protection of due process. At the same time, even when the working procedures are themselves sound, a panel's failure to adhere to those procedures may be pertinent to, albeit not necessarily determinative of, the issue of whether such panel has failed to ensure the protection of due process in a given instance.

We also recall that panel proceedings consist of two main stages, the first of which involves each party setting out its 'case in chief, including a full presentation of the facts on the basis of submission of supporting evidence', and the second designed to permit the rebuttal by each party of the arguments and evidence submitted by the other parties. 12 Nonetheless, the submission of evidence may not always fall neatly into one or the other of these categories, in particular when panels themselves, in the exercise of their fact finding authority, seek to pursue specific lines of inquiry in their questioning of the parties. In this respect, we wish to reiterate that due process will best be served by working procedures that provide 'for appropriate factual discovery at an early stage in panel proceedings' 13, and that '[d]ue process may be of particular concern in cases where a party raises new facts at a late stage of the panel proceedings.' 14 Furthermore, when the particular circumstances of specific disputes present situations that are not explicitly regulated by their working procedures, panels, in the exercise of their control over the proceedings, and subject to the constraints of due process and the DSU, enjoy a margin of discretion to deal with such situations. 15

1.3.2.3 Due process demands when identifying the measures and claims at issue

8. The European Communities argued in *EC – Computer Equipment* that its right to due process during the course of the proceedings was violated because the term LAN equipment lacked precision in the request for establishment of a panel. The Appellate Body stated:

"We do not see how the alleged lack of precision of the terms, LAN equipment and PCs with multimedia capability, in the request for the establishment of a panel affected the rights of defence of the European Communities in the course of the panel proceedings.

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10 (footnote original) We observe that, in *India – Patents (US)*, the Appellate Body held that, while panels enjoy some discretion in establishing their own working procedures, this discretion does not extend to modifying the substantive provisions of the DSU. (Appellate Body Report, *India – Patents (US)*, para. 92. See also Appellate Body Report, *US – FSC (Article 21.5 – EC)*, para. 241)


14 (footnote original) Appellate Body Report, *US – Gambling*, para. 271. (original emphasis)


As the ability of the European Communities to defend itself was not prejudiced by a lack of knowing the measures at issue, we do not believe that the fundamental rule of due process was violated by the Panel.”\(^{17}\)

9. In *India – Patents (US)*, the Appellate Body noted that “the demands of due process that are implicit in the DSU make [the clear statement of the claims and the free disclosure of facts] especially necessary during consultations”.\(^{18}\)

10. In *Chile – Price Band System*, the Appellate Body ruled that “[t]he requirements of due process and orderly procedure dictate that claims must be made explicitly in WTO dispute settlement”.\(^{19}\) Also in *Chile – Price Band System*, the Appellate Body, in the context of its analysis of whether an amendment to a measure after the request for establishment of a panel was part of the measure at issue, considered the importance for the “demands of due process” “that a complaining party should not have to adjust its pleadings throughout dispute settlement proceedings in order to deal with a disputed measure as a 'moving target' ”.\(^{20}\)

### 1.3.2.4 Right of response

11. In *Australia – Salmon*, the Appellate Body warned panels to be careful to observe due process, when complying with the Article 12.2 requirement of flexibility in panel procedures, by providing parties with adequate opportunity to respond to evidence submitted:

   "We note that Article 12.2 of the DSU provides that '[p]anel procedures should provide sufficient flexibility so as to ensure high-quality panel reports, while not unduly delaying the panel process.' However, a panel must also be careful to observe due process, which entails providing the parties adequate opportunity to respond to the evidence submitted."\(^{21}\)

12. In *Australia – Salmon*, the Appellate Body further indicated that "[a] fundamental tenet of due process is that a party be provided with an opportunity to respond to claims made against it". In this case, Australia had claimed that the Panel erred in failing to accord it an opportunity to submit a formal written rebuttal submission to respond to the oral statement made by Canada at the second meeting. The Appellate Body, noting that Australia had requested one week to respond to Canada's oral statement and that the Panel had granted Australia's request, dismissed the claim as follows:

   "A fundamental tenet of due process is that a party be provided with an opportunity to respond to claims made against it. In this case, we believe that the Panel did accord Australia a proper opportunity to respond by allowing Australia to submit a third written submission. We cannot see how the Panel failed to accord due process to Australia by granting the extra time it had requested."\(^{22}\)

13. In *Chile – Price Band System*, the Appellate Body concluded that the Panel had made a finding on a claim not made by Argentina. Chile had claimed that, by making a finding on that claim, the Panel had deprived Chile of a fair right to response. The Appellate Body agreed with Chile and ruled that the Panel had acted inconsistently with Article 11 of the DSU by denying Chile the fair right of response and thus had denied it the due process rights to which it was entitled:

   "There is, furthermore, the requirement of due process. As Argentina made no claim under the second sentence of Article II:1(b) of the GATT 1994, Chile was entitled to assume that the second sentence was not in issue in the dispute, and that there was no need to offer a defence against a claim under that sentence. We agree with Chile

\(^{17}\) Appellate Body Report, *EC – Computer Equipment*, para. 70.

\(^{18}\) Appellate Body Report, *India – Patents (US)*, para. 94.

\(^{19}\) Appellate Body Report, *Chile – Price Band System*, para. 164.


\(^{22}\) Appellate Body Report, *Australia – Salmon*, para. 278.
that, by making a finding on the second sentence—a claim that was neither made nor argued—the Panel deprived Chile of a 'fair right of response'.

As we said in *India – Patents*, '... the demands of due process ... are implicit in the DSU'. And, as we said in *Australia – Salmon* on the right of response, '[a] fundamental tenet of due process is that a party be provided with an opportunity to respond to claims made against it'. Chile contends that this fundamental tenet of due process was not observed on this issue.

As we said earlier, Article 11 imposes duties on panels that extend beyond the requirement to assess evidence objectively and in good faith, as suggested by Argentina. This requirement is, of course, an indispensable aspect of a panel's task. However, in making 'an objective assessment of the matter before it', a panel is also duty bound to ensure that due process is respected. Due process is an obligation inherent in the WTO dispute settlement system. A panel will fail in the duty to respect due process if it makes a finding on a matter that is not before it, because it will thereby fail to accord to a party a fair right of response. In this case, because the Panel did not give Chile a fair right of response on this issue, we find that the Panel failed to accord to Chile the due process rights to which it is entitled under the DSU.'

14. In *Thailand – Cigarettes (Philippines)*, Thailand claimed that the Panel violated Thailand's due process rights and acted inconsistently with Article 11 of the DSU by accepting and relying on certain evidence without affording Thailand the right to comment on that evidence. The Appellate Body found that the Panel had not failed to accord Thailand due process in the circumstances of that case, but underscored the importance of the right of response in WTO proceedings:

"As a general rule, due process requires that each party be afforded a meaningful opportunity to comment on the arguments and evidence adduced by the other party. This was expressly acknowledged by the Appellate Body in *Australia – Salmon* when it stated that "'[a] fundamental tenet of due process is that a party be provided with an opportunity to respond to claims made against it'. At the same time, due process may also require a panel to take appropriate account of the need to safeguard other interests, such as an aggrieved party's right to have recourse to an adjudicative process in which it can seek redress in a timely manner, and the need for proceedings to be brought to a close. These interests find reflection in the provisions of the DSU, including Article 3.3, which calls for "[t]he prompt settlement" of WTO disputes, as this is "essential to the effective functioning of the WTO and the maintenance of a proper balance between the rights and obligations of Members". Likewise, Article 12.2 of the DSU provides that "[p]anel procedures should provide sufficient flexibility so as to ensure high-quality panel reports, while not unduly delaying the panel process". Furthermore, "in the interests of due process, parties should bring alleged procedural deficiencies to the attention of a panel at the earliest possible opportunity". Accordingly, ensuring due process requires a balancing of various interests, including systemic interests as well as those of the parties, and both general and case-specific considerations. In our view, panels are best situated to determine how this balance should be struck in any given proceeding, provided that they are vigilant in the protection of due process and remain within the bounds of their duties under Article 11 of the DSU.

...

23 (footnote original) Chile's appellant's submission, para. 23.
24 (footnote original) Appellate Body Report [...] para. 94.
25 (footnote original) Appellate Body Report [...] para. 278.
... As set out above, due process generally demands that each party be afforded a meaningful opportunity to comment on evidence adduced by the other party. At the same time, a number of different considerations will need to be factored into a panel’s effort to protect due process in a particular dispute, and these may include the need for a panel, in pursuing prompt resolution of the dispute, to exercise control over the proceedings in order to bring an end to the back and forth exchange of competing evidence by the parties. In the context of this dispute, there are several considerations that are germane to our assessment of Thailand’s claim under Article 11 of the DSU. These include: the conduct of the parties; the legal issue to which the evidence related and the circumstances surrounding the submission of the evidence relating to that issue; and the discretion afforded under the DSU to panels in their handling of the proceedings and appreciation of the evidence.29

15. In the context of amicus curiae submissions, the Panel in US – Tuna II (Mexico) stated that "[w]here the Panel considered the information presented in and the evidence attached to the amicus curiae brief relevant, it has sought the views of the parties in accordance with the requirements of due process".30 In the course of its analysis, the Panel reiterated that "insofar as the Panel deemed this information to be relevant for the purposes of its assessment, it invited Mexico to comment on it in order to take full account of Mexico’s right of response and defense in respect of due process considerations".31

1.4 Article 12.1: special and additional procedures in panel proceedings

1.4.1 The panel’s margin of discretion under Article 12.1

16. In India – Patents (US), the Appellate Body found that the Panel exceeded its authority by ruling, at the first substantive meeting, that all legal claims would be considered if they were made prior to the end of that meeting. The Appellate Body stated that:

"Although panels enjoy some discretion in establishing their own working procedures, this discretion does not extend to modifying the substantive provisions of the DSU. To be sure, Article 12.1 of the DSU says: ‘Panels shall follow the Working Procedures in Appendix 3 unless the panel decides otherwise after consulting the parties to the dispute’. Yet that is all it says. Nothing in the DSU gives a panel the authority either to disregard or to modify other explicit provisions of the DSU."32

17. In EC – Hormones, the Panel decided to hold a joint meeting with the scientific experts in the two parallel disputes brought by the United States and Canada. The Appellate Body considered the Panel’s approach to be reasonable, and stated that:

"Although Article 12.1 and Appendix 3 of the DSU do not specifically require the Panel to grant this opportunity to the United States, we believe that this decision falls within the sound discretion and authority of the Panel, particularly if the Panel considers it necessary for ensuring to all parties due process of law. In this regard, we note that in European Communities - Bananas, the panel considered that particular circumstances justified the grant to third parties of rights somewhat broader than those explicitly envisaged in Article 10 and Appendix 3 of the DSU."33

18. In US – Shrimp, the Appellate Body ruled that panels have the discretion to accept unsolicited amicus curiae briefs. The Appellate Body found support for this conclusion in Article 12.1:

"It is also pertinent to note that Article 12.1 of the DSU authorizes panels to depart from, or to add to, the Working Procedures set forth in Appendix 3 of the DSU, and in effect to develop their own Working Procedures, after consultation with the parties to the dispute. Article 12.2 goes on to direct that "[p]anel procedures should provide

29 Appellate Body Report, Thailand – Cigarettes (Philippines), paras. 150 and 155.
32 Appellate Body Report, India – Patents (US), para. 92.
sufficient flexibility so as to ensure high-quality panel reports while not unduly delaying the panel process." (emphasis added)

The thrust of Articles 12 and 13, taken together, is that the DSU accords to a panel established by the DSB, and engaged in a dispute settlement proceeding, ample and extensive authority to undertake and to control the process by which it informs itself both of the relevant facts of the dispute and of the legal norms and principles applicable to such facts. That authority, and the breadth thereof, is indispensably necessary to enable a panel to discharge its duty imposed by Article 11 of the DSU to "make an objective assessment of the matter before it, including an objective assessment of the facts of the case and the applicability of and conformity with the relevant covered agreements ..." (emphasis added)"34

1.4.2 Special and additional procedures to protect business confidential information (BCI)

19. Panels have adopted additional procedures to protect BCI in a number of disputes. The Panel in Canada – Aircraft observed that Article 12.1 granted it the authority to do so:

"We note that procedures concerning the protection of confidential information are provided for in Article 18.2 of the DSU. We note, however, that Article 12.1 of the DSU effectively permits panels to adopt working procedures in addition to those set forth in the DSU, after consulting the parties to the dispute. Given the sensitive nature of the BCI that could be submitted to the Panel in the present case, and given the agreement between the parties on the need for additional protection of such Business Confidential Information, the Panel decided to adopt special Procedures Governing Business Confidential Information that go beyond the protection afforded by Article 18.2 of the DSU. The Panel agreed with Canada that such Procedures should strike a balance between "reasonable access" to BCI, and the need to protect the integrity of such BCI."35

20. For information on special and additional procedures adopted by panels regarding BCI, see the Section on Article 18 of the DSU.

1.4.3 Special and additional procedures for open panel hearings

1.4.3.1 General

21. Several panels have opened their hearings to the public, pursuant to the authority to adopt special and additional procedures under Article 12.1 of the DSU. The Panel in US/Canada – Continued Suspension, the first panel to open its hearings to the public, explained that:

"The Panel thus is of the view that Article 12.1 entitles it to proceed with any adaptation of the working procedures contained in Appendix 3, as long as such an adaptation is not expressly prohibited by any provision of the DSU. Therefore, we need to examine whether there is any DSU provision that would explicitly prohibit the opening of panel meetings to public observation."36

22. The Panel concluded that "it is entitled, under the particular circumstances of this case and pursuant to Article 12.1 of the DSU, to open its hearings for public observation".37

23. For information on panel hearings opened to the public, see the Section on Article 18 of the DSU.

35 Panel Report, Canada – Aircraft, para. 9.56.
36 Panel Reports. US/Canada – Continued Suspension, para. 7.45.
37 Panel Reports. US/Canada – Continued Suspension, para. 7.51.
1.4.4 Special and additional procedures for third parties

24. For information on proceedings in which additional third party rights were requested, see the Section on Article 10 of the DSU.

1.4.5 Special and additional procedure for separate briefing and argumentation on threshold issue

25. In US – Upland Cotton, the Panel decided to structure the proceeding into two stages. First, the Panel would determine whether measures raised in this dispute satisfy the conditions in Article 13 of the Agreement on Agriculture. To the extent that it was able to do so, it would defer its consideration of claims under Articles 3, 5 and 6 of the SCM Agreement and Article XVI of the GATT 1994 until after it determined whether measures raised in this dispute satisfy the conditions in Article 13.38

1.5 Article 12.2: flexibility and undue delay

26. In Australia – Salmon, the Appellate Body warned panels to be careful to observe due process when complying with Article 12.2 requirement of flexibility in panel procedures:

"We note that Article 12.2 of the DSU provides that 'panel procedures should provide sufficient flexibility so as to ensure high-quality panel reports, while not unduly delaying the panel process.' However, a panel must also be careful to observe due process, which entails providing the parties adequate opportunity to respond to the evidence submitted."39

27. In US – Cotton Yarn, the Panel declined a request by the United States to attach the parties' full submissions to the Report. The Panel considered that, among other things, doing so would "unduly delay the process":

"In the present dispute, this Panel at the outset declined to follow the attachment method. Using the attachment method would increase the Descriptive Part of the Report to approximately 400 single-spaced pages from the approximately 70 it now is. We do not consider this to be a viable approach. We are aware that the WTO dispute settlement system is struggling under the burden of massive translation requirements arising from the multi-hundred page Reports that result from the attachment method Using such a method here would also result in significant delays in issuing the Final Report.165 We take note of Article 12.2 of the DSU, which provides that "panel procedures should provide sufficient flexibility so as to ensure high-quality panel reports, while not unduly delaying the panel process".166 Furthermore, while our responsibility is to decide the case before us, we also feel constrained not to take steps that would damage the dispute settlement system as a whole."40

28. In Thailand – Cigarettes (Philippines), the Appellate Body explained that the right of each party to comment on the arguments and evidence of the other party must be balanced against the need for proceedings to be brought to a close:

"As a general rule, due process requires that each party be afforded a meaningful opportunity to comment on the arguments and evidence adduced by the other party. This was expressly acknowledged by the Appellate Body in Australia – Salmon when it stated that '[a] fundamental tenet of due process is that a party be provided an opportunity to respond to claims made against it'. At the same time, due process may also require a panel to take appropriate account of the need to safeguard other interests, such as an aggrieved party's right to have recourse to an adjudicative process in which it can seek redress in a timely manner, and the need for proceedings to be brought to a close. These interests find reflection in the provisions of the DSU, including Article 3.3, which calls for '[t]he prompt settlement' of WTO disputes, as this

40 Panel Report, US – Cotton Yarn, para. 7.10. See also Panel Report, EC – Tube or Pipe Fittings, para. 7.53.
is ‘essential to the effective functioning of the WTO and the maintenance of a proper balance between the rights and obligations of Members’. Likewise, Article 12.2 of the DSU provides that ‘[p]anel procedures should provide sufficient flexibility so as to ensure high-quality panel reports, while not unduly delaying the panel process’. Furthermore, ‘in the interests of due process, parties should bring alleged procedural deficiencies to the attention of a panel at the earliest possible opportunity’. Accordingly, ensuring due process requires a balancing of various interests, including systemic interests as well as those of the parties, and both general and case-specific considerations. In our view, panels are best situated to determine how this balance should be struck in any given proceeding, provided that they are vigilant in the protection of due process and remain within the bounds of their duties under Article 11 of the DSU.”41

1.6 Article 12.3: Panel’s timetable

29. In US – Steel Safeguards, the Panel sent a letter to all parties including a series of preliminary rulings on organizational matters. Among other issues, the Panel referred to the timetable for its proceedings as follows:

"The Panel notes at the outset that this case is likely to impose a heavy burden on parties in terms of their obligations to make submissions as set out in the timetable for the proceedings, a copy of which is attached. As is noted at the end of the timetable, the Panel would like to emphasize that the calendar may be changed during the panel process. The Panel would also like to assure parties that it will do its utmost, within reason, to accommodate the parties' concerns and requests in relation to the deadlines set out in the timetable. Some of the requests that have been made by the parties in this respect are already reflected in the attached timetable."42

1.7 Article 12.6: written submissions

1.7.1 Legal right to have a submission considered by the panel

30. In US – Shrimp, the Appellate Body considered whether panels have the right to accept so-called amicus curiae briefs. In this context, the Appellate Body made a general statement on the issue of access to the dispute settlement process of the WTO. After noting that the access is limited to the Members of the WTO, the Appellate Body stated:

"[U]nder the DSU, only Members who are parties to a dispute, or who have notified their interest in becoming third parties in such a dispute to the DSB, have a legal right to make submissions to, and have a legal right to have those submissions considered by, a panel. Correlatively, a panel is obliged in law to accept and give due consideration only to submissions made by the parties and the third parties in a panel proceeding. These are basic legal propositions; they do not, however, dispose of the issue here presented by the appellant's first claim of error. We believe this interpretative issue is most appropriately addressed by examining what a panel is authorized to do under the DSU."43

1.7.2 Meaning of the term "second written submission"

31. In US – Steel Safeguards, the Panel sent a letter to all parties including a series of preliminary rulings on organizational matters. Among the issues, the Panel referred to the United States' request to replace the reference to "rebuttal submissions" in paragraph 11 of its Working Procedures with the word "rebuttals". This paragraph dealt with the timing of the submission of factual evidence.44 In support of this proposal, the United States made the argument that the

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41 Appellate Body Report, Thailand – Cigarettes (Philippines), para. 150.
42 Appellate Body Report, US – Steel Safeguards, para. 5.3.
44 Paragraph 11 of the Panel’s Working Procedures read as follows: Parties shall submit all factual evidence to the Panel no later than during the first substantive meeting, except with respect to evidence necessary for purposes of rebuttal submissions, or answers to questions or provided that good cause is shown.
word “submission” is ordinarily taken to mean written submissions. Hence, the reference to “rebuttal submissions” in paragraph 11 would restrict the application of the qualification in that paragraph to rebuttals made in writing and would not extend to rebuttals made orally. The complainants argued in response that the suggested amendment would allow, for example, new arguments and evidence to be adduced orally at the Panel's second substantive meeting. The Panel disagreed and, recalling the comments made by the Appellate Body in the case Argentina - Textiles and Apparel, indicated that they had drafted paragraph 11 to ensure due process and that new evidence was not adduced at a late stage in the panel process, while simultaneously ensuring that all parties and the Panel were kept fully informed of all relevant evidence.

1.7.3 "Any subsequent written submissions shall be submitted simultaneously"

32. In US – FSC (Article 21.5 – EC), the respondent, the United States, requested that the Article 21.5 compliance panel deviate from Article 12.6 of the DSU, which provides that the sequential first written submissions are to be followed by simultaneous written rebuttals. The United States argued that the European Communities had new material from the submission of the United States to rebut in its rebuttal submission, while the United States had nothing new to respond to. The Panel denied the request on the following grounds:

“We recall that we adopted our working procedures after having heard the views of the parties, including their views on the issue of the timing of the filing of their rebuttal submissions. We do not believe that any development or consideration has since arisen that would require us to reconsider this aspect of our working procedures, particularly given the current advanced stage of the proceedings and the difficulties inherent in adjusting other aspects of the Panel’s schedule that such a change would necessitate.

We therefore deny this request by the United States to change the Panel’s schedule with respect to the timing for filing the parties’ second written submissions. We note that the United States, as well as the European Communities, if they wish, would be able to respond to, or comment on, the other party’s rebuttals in their oral statements at the substantive meeting.”

1.8 Article 12.7: "basic rationale behind any findings and recommendations"

1.8.1 Minimum standard required

33. In Korea – Alcoholic Beverages, the Appellate Body, although refraining from attempting to define the scope of the obligation in Article 12.7, considered that the Panel had not failed to set out the basic rationale for its findings and recommendations as required by Article 12.7 of the DSU because it had provided a “detailed and thorough” rationale for its findings:

“Korea claims that the Panel has failed to fulfil its obligation under Article 12.7 of the DSU to set out the basic rationale behind its findings and recommendations. Korea maintains that “much” of the Panel Report contains contradictions and that it is vague.

..."
not fail to set out the basic rationale for its findings and recommendations as required by Article 12.7 of the DSU."\(^{47}\)

34. Similarly, in Chile – Alcoholic Beverages the Appellate Body concluded that the Panel had set out a "basic rationale" for its finding and recommendation on the issue of "not similarly taxed", as required by Article 12.7 of the DSU, because it had "identified the legal standard it applied, examined the relevant facts, and provided reasons for its conclusion that dissimilar taxation existed."\(^{48}\)

35. In Argentina – Footwear (EC), the Appellate Body, although not agreeing with all the Panel's reasoning, considered that it had met its obligation under Article 12.7 because the Panel had "conducted extensive factual and legal analyses of the competing claims made by the parties, set out numerous factual findings based on detailed consideration of the evidence before the Argentine authorities as well as other evidence presented to the Panel, and provided extensive explanations of how and why it reached its factual and legal conclusions".\(^{49}\)

36. In Mexico – Corn Syrup (Article 21.5 – US), the Appellate Body analysed the term "basic rationale" and considered that Article 12.7 establishes a minimum standard for the reasoning that panels must provide in support of their findings and recommendations. The Appellate Body, however, indicated that it did not believe that it is either possible or desirable to determine, in the abstract, the minimum standard of reasoning that will constitute a "basic rationale" for the findings and recommendations made by a panel:

"In considering the scope of the duties imposed on panels under Article 12.7, we turn first to the dictionary meaning of 'basic', which includes both 'fundamental; essential' and 'constituting a minimum ... at the lowest acceptable level'. 'Rationale' means both 'a reasoned exposition of principles; an explanation or statement of reasons' and 'the fundamental or underlying reason for or basis of a thing; a justification'. The 'basic rationale' which a panel must provide is directly linked, by the wording of Article 12.7, to the 'findings and recommendations' made by a panel. We, therefore, consider that Article 12.7 establishes a minimum standard for the reasoning that panels must provide in support of their findings and recommendations. Panels must set forth explanations and reasons sufficient to disclose the essential, or fundamental, justification for those findings and recommendations.

In our view, the duty of panels under Article 12.7 of the DSU to provide a 'basic rationale' reflects and conforms with the principles of fundamental fairness and due process that underlie and inform the provisions of the DSU. In particular, in cases where a Member has been found to have acted inconsistently with its obligations under the covered agreements, that Member is entitled to know the reasons for such finding as a matter of due process. In addition, the requirement to set out a 'basic rationale' in the panel report assists such Member to understand the nature of its obligations and to make informed decisions about: (i) what must be done in order to implement the eventual rulings and recommendations made by the DSB; and (ii) whether and what to appeal. Article 12.7 also furthers the objectives, expressed in Article 3.2 of the DSU, of promoting security and predictability in the multilateral trading system and of clarifying the existing provisions of the covered agreements, because the requirement to provide 'basic' reasons contributes to other WTO Members' understanding of the nature and scope of the rights and obligations in the covered agreements.

We do not believe that it is either possible or desirable to determine, in the abstract, the minimum standard of reasoning that will constitute a 'basic rationale' for the findings and recommendations made by a panel. Whether a panel has articulated adequately the 'basic rationale' for its findings and recommendations must be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the facts of the case, the specific legal provisions at issue, and the particular findings and recommendations made by a panel. Panels must identify the relevant facts and the applicable legal

\(^{47}\) Appellate Body Report, Korea – Alcoholic Beverages, paras. 166 and 168.

\(^{48}\) Appellate Body on Chile – Alcoholic Beverages, para. 78.

\(^{49}\) Appellate Body on Argentina – Footwear (EC), para. 149.
norms. In applying those legal norms to the relevant facts, the reasoning of the panel must reveal how and why the law applies to the facts. In this way, panels will, in their reports, disclose the essential or fundamental justification for their findings and recommendations.

This does not, however, necessarily imply that Article 12.7 requires panels to expound at length on the reasons for their findings and recommendations. We can, for example, envisage cases in which a panel's 'basic rationale' might be found in reasoning that is set out in other documents, such as in previous panel or Appellate Body reports – provided that such reasoning is quoted or, at a minimum, incorporated by reference. Indeed, a panel acting pursuant to Article 21.5 of the DSU would be expected to refer to the initial panel report, particularly in cases where the implementing measure is closely related to the original measure, and where the claims made in the proceeding under Article 21.5 closely resemble the claims made in the initial panel proceedings.\(^{50}\)

37. In *Mexico – Corn Syrup (Article 21.5 – US)*, the Appellate Body further noted that for purposes of transparency and fairness to the parties, an Article 21.5 panel "should strive to present the essential justification for its findings and recommendations in its own report":

"Having regard to these circumstances, we are of the view that the Panel Report, read together with the original panel report, leaves no doubt about the reasons for the Panel's additional finding under Article 3.1 of the *Anti-Dumping Agreement*. We, therefore, find that the Panel did not fail to provide a "basic rationale" for that finding.

..."

We wish to add that for purposes of transparency and fairness to the parties, even a panel proceeding under Article 21.5 of the DSU should strive to present the essential justification for its findings and recommendations in its own report. In this case, in particular, we consider that the Panel's finding under Article 3.1 of the *Anti-Dumping Agreement* would have been better supported by a direct quotation from or, at least, an explicit reference to, the relevant reasoning set out in the original panel report.\(^{51}\)

38. In *US – Steel Safeguards*, the Appellate Body also considered that the Panel had complied with Article 12.7 by providing a detailed explanation on how the investigating authority had failed to provide a reasoned and adequate explanation:

"Based on our review of the Panel's reasoning, it appears to us that the Panel considered in detail the evidence that was before the USITC, and provided detailed explanations of how and why it concluded that the USITC had failed to demonstrate, through a reasoned and adequate explanation, that the alleged 'unforeseen developments' resulted in increased imports of each product subject to a safeguard measure ...

In our view, in making these statements, the Panel has sufficiently set out in its reports the 'basic rationale' for its finding that the USITC failed to explain how, though 'plausible', the "unforeseen developments" identified in the report in fact resulted in increased imports of the specific products subject to the safeguard measures at issue."\(^{52}\)

39. In *US – Oil Country Tubular Goods Sunset Reviews (Article 21.5 – Argentina)*, the complainant requested that the Panel make a suggestion pursuant to Article 19.1, and then claimed on appeal that the manner in which the Panel "summarily" dismissed its request was inconsistent with the Panel's duties under Articles 11 and 12.7 of the DSU. The Appellate Body stated:


\(^{51}\) Appellate Body on *Mexico – Corn Syrup (Article 21.5 – US)*, paras. 124 and 126.

\(^{52}\) Appellate Body Report, *US – Steel Safeguards*, paras. 503-504. See also paras. 5.5-507.
"The Panel addressed Argentina's request for a suggestion in paragraph 9.4 of the Panel Report. The Panel's explanation is brief, but it is sufficient to convey that the Panel considered Argentina's request and that, in the light of the discretionary nature of the authority to make a suggestion, the Panel declined to exercise that discretion. The discretionary nature of the authority to make a suggestion under Article 19.1 must be kept in mind when examining the sufficiency of a panel's decision not to exercise such authority. However, it should not relieve a panel from engaging with the arguments put forward by a party in support of such a request. In the present case, Argentina offered several reasons in support of its request for a suggestion. Although it would have been advisable for the Panel to articulate more clearly the reasons why it declined to exercise its discretion to make a suggestion, this does not mean that Panel's exercise of its discretion was improper, and, thus, even assuming arguendo that Articles 11 and 12.7 were applicable to a request for suggestion, we do not consider that, in the circumstances of this case, the Panel failed to fulfil its duties under those provisions."53

40. In US – Carbon Steel (India), the Appellate Body found that the Panel provided a basic rationale for a finding by incorporating by reference the reasoning set forth in an earlier Appellate Body report:

"Turning first to India's claim under Article 12.7 of the DSU, we note that the Appellate Body has considered that the term 'basic rationale' in that provision establishes a minimum standard for the reasoning that panels must provide in support of their findings and recommendations. Thus, panels must set forth explanations and reasons sufficient to disclose the essential, or fundamental, justification for those findings and recommendations. Moreover, whether a panel has articulated a basic rationale for its findings must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Fundamentally, Article 12.7 of the DSU does not require panels to expound at length on the reasons for their findings and recommendations. In this regard, the Appellate Body has considered that 'a panel's 'basic rationale' might be found in reasoning that is set out in other documents, such as in previous panel or Appellate Body reports – provided that such reasoning is quoted or, at a minimum, incorporated by reference.'

As we see it, the Panel provided a basic rationale for its finding by incorporating by reference the reasoning set forth in the Appellate Body report in US – Softwood Lumber IV. As we have found above, the reasoning in that report supports the Panel's finding that Article 14(d) permits the use of out-of-country benchmarks in situations in which the government is not a predominant provider of the relevant good. Accordingly, we do not consider that the Panel acted inconsistently with the standard under Article 12.7 of the DSU."54

1.8.2 Business confidential information

41. The Appellate Body on Japan – DRAMs (Korea) clarified that a panel, when redacting confidential information from a report at the request of one or both of the parties, should bear in mind the rights of third parties and other WTO Members under, inter alia, Article 12.7 of the DSU, so that the public version of its report circulated to all WTO Members is understandable:

"[A] panel, in deciding to redact ... [confidential] information from its report at the request of one or both of the parties, should bear in mind the rights of third parties and other WTO Members under various provisions of the DSU, such as Articles 12.7 and 16. Accordingly, a panel must make efforts to ensure that the public version of its report circulated to all Members of the WTO is understandable."55

54 Appellate Body Report, S – Carbon Steel (India), paras. 4.194-4.195.
55 Appellate Body Report, Japan – DRAMs (Korea), para. 279.
1.8.3 Issuance of a brief report where a mutually agreed solution is reached

42. There have been several cases in which panels issued a "brief report" following the notification of a mutually agreed solution prior to the completion of the panel's work.56

43. The Panel in US – Shrimp (Ecuador) found that although the responding party did not contest any of the claims of the complaining party, the parties had not characterized their shared views on the substantive matter before the Panel as a "mutually agreed solution", and, thus, Article 12.7 of the DSU did not apply.57

1.9 Articles 12.8 and 12.9: time-limit for proceeding

1.9.1 General

44. In US – Section 301 Trade Act, the Panel stated that most of the time-limits in the DSU are either minimum time-limits without ceilings, or "maximum time-limits that are, nonetheless, indicative only". The Panel considered Articles 12.8, 12.9, 17.5, and 20 of the DSU to be examples of the latter, noting that:

"Article 12.8 refers to six months "as a general rule" for the timeframe between panel composition and issuance of the final report to the parties. Article 12.9 provides that "[i]n no case should the period from the establishment of the panel to the circulation of the report to the Members exceed nine months" (emphasis added). Article 17.5 states that "[a]s a general rule, the proceedings [of the Appellate Body] shall not exceed 60 days". It adds, however, that "[i]n no case shall the proceedings exceed 90 days". However, even this seemingly compulsory deadline has been passed in three cases so far (United States – Restrictions on Imports of Cotton and Man-Made Fibre Underwear, DS24/AB/R, 91 days; European Communities – Measures Concerning Meat and Meat Products (Hormones) ("EC – Hormones"), DS26/AB/R and DS48/AB/R, 114 days; and US – Shrimp, op. cit., 91 days). Finally, Article 20 refers to 9 months – 12 months in case of an appeal – "as a general rule" for the period between panel establishment and adoption of report(s) by the DSB."58

45. In EC – Bananas III (Article 21.5 – Ecuador II) / EC – Bananas III (Article 21.5 – US), the Appellate Body contrasted the language of Articles 12.8 and 12.9 with the language found in Article 21.5 of the DSU:

"Article 21.5 provides that a panel shall circulate its report within 90 days after the date of referral of the matter to it. If an Article 21.5 panel considers that it cannot provide its report within that timeframe, it must notify the DSB, specifying the reasons for the delay together with an estimate of the period within which it will issue its report. By contrast, Articles 12.8 and 12.9 of the DSU prescribe that original panel proceedings "shall, as a general rule, not exceed six months" and "should" in no case exceed nine months."59

1.10 Articles 12.10 and 12.11: special & differential treatment

1.10.1 "the panel shall accord sufficient time for the developing country Member to prepare and present its argumentation"

46. In India – Quantitative Restrictions, India requested additional time to prepare and present its first written submission, pursuant to Article 12.10 of the DSU. The Panel, "in light of this

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56 See e.g. Panel Reports, EC – Scallops; EC – Butter; US – DRAMS (Article 21.5 – Korea); and Japan – Quotas on Laver.
58 Panel Report, US – Section 301 Trade Act, para. 7.31 and footnote 646.
provision, and considering the administrative reorganization taking place in India as a result of the recent change in government," decided to grant an additional period of time (10 days) to India.60

47. In Turkey – Rice, the Panel explicitly mentioned this provision and explained that, "during the Panel proceedings, the Panel took into account the respondent's status as a developing country Member, a fact not contested by the complainant, when preparing and revising the timetable for the process." The Panel added that it had "attempted, inter alia, to accommodate, to the extent possible, Turkey's requests for extensions of deadlines to submit responses to the questions posed by the Panel both after the first and second substantive meetings, as well as Turkey's request for time to submit comments on the United States comments to the Panel's interim report."61

48. In Philippines – Distilled Spirits, the Panel recalled the terms of Article 12.10 and stated that "[d]uring the proceedings, we took into account the respondent's status as a developing country Member, particularly when preparing the timetable for the process after having heard the views of the parties".62

1.10.2 Explicit indication in the panel's report of how special and differential provisions were taken into account

49. In India – Quantitative Restrictions, the Panel considered that "Article 12.11 of the DSU requires us to indicate explicitly the form in which account was taken of relevant provisions on special and differential treatment for developing country Members that form part of the covered agreements which have been raised by the developing country Member in the course of the dispute settlement procedures". The Panel then noted that its analysis of Article XVIII:B of GATT 1994 which embodies the principle of special and differential treatment in relation to measures taken for balance-of-payments purposes, reflected its consideration of the relevant provisions on special and differential treatment.63

50. In US – Offset Act (Byrd Amendment), India and Indonesia argued that the Act undermined Article 15 of the Anti-Dumping Agreement on special and differential treatment for developing countries. The United States responded that Article 15 was not part of the terms of reference of the Panel as it had not been identified in any of the complaining parties' requests for establishment of a panel. The Panel, although acknowledging that Article 15 was not mentioned in the request, noted that Article 12.11 of the DSU required it to explicitly indicate how it had taken into account the relevant special and differential provisions of the covered agreements which are raised by developing countries in the proceedings:

"We note that there is no reference to AD Article 15 in the various requests for establishment of this Panel. Generally, therefore, AD Article 15 would not fall within our terms of reference.64 However, we note that DSU Article 12.11 requires panels to "explicitly indicate the form in which account has been taken of relevant provisions on differential and more-favourable treatment for developing country Members that form part of the covered agreements which have been raised by the developing country Member in the course of the dispute settlement procedures". Since we consider AD Article 15 to be relevant, and since that provision has been raised by developing country Members in the present proceedings, we are bound to consider that provision, even though it was not referred to in the various requests for establishment. In doing so, we note that certain developing country Members attach importance to price undertakings as a "constructive" alternative to anti-dumping duties."65

51. In Mexico – Telecoms, the Panel explained the manner in which it had taken into account in its findings, pursuant to Article 12.11, the relevant GATS special and differential provisions for developing country Members:
"The Panel notes that, pursuant to Article 12.11 of the DSU, it has taken into account in its findings GATS provisions on differential and more-favourable treatment for developing country Members. In particular, the Panel has examined Mexico's arguments that commitments of such Members have to be interpreted in the light of Article IV of the GATS, paragraph 5 of the preamble to the GATS, and paragraph 5(g) of the Annex on Telecommunications. The Panel emphasizes that its findings in no way prevent Mexico from actively pursuing the development objectives referred to in these provisions by extending telecommunications networks and services at affordable prices in a manner consistent with its GATS commitments."

52. In Turkey – Rice, the Panel referred to Article 12.10 and Article 12.11 and observed that:

"The Panel notes that, in the course of these Panel proceedings Turkey did not raise any specific provisions on differential and more-favourable treatment for developing country Members that require particular consideration, nor do we find these specialized provisions relevant for the resolution of the specific matter brought before this Panel."

1.11 Article 12.12: suspension of work

53. In EU – Fatty Alcohols (Indonesia), the European Union requested the Panel to issue a preliminary ruling and find that its authority had lapsed, pursuant to Article 12.12 of the DSU, as a consequence of an alleged suspension of the Panel proceedings for more than 12 months. The Panel concluded that in the absence of a request by the complainant pursuant to Article 12.12, the Panel's work had not been suspended and the Panel's authority had therefore not lapsed. The Appellate Body found that the authority of the Panel had not lapsed, on the grounds that a decision to suspend the work of a panel cannot be taken at any point prior to the Panel having been composed. In the course of its reasoning, the Appellate Body stated:

"We have observed above that the text of Article 12.12 envisages that a decision is taken, and discretion is exercised by a panel. Similarly, other provisions relating to panel procedures contemplate action by the panel. For instance, Article 12.5 stipulates that panels should set precise deadlines for written submissions by the parties, and Article 13 provides a right for panels to seek information and technical advice from any individual or body they deem appropriate. This contrasts with other references to 'a panel' or 'the panel' in provisions relating to earlier stages of a dispute, which do not contemplate action by the panel. Article 6.1, for instance, provides that a panel shall be established by the DSB if certain conditions are met. However, this provision does not refer to any action to be taken by the panel at that point in time. We consider that this, along with the fact that Article 12.12 envisages that discretion be exercised, as well as the placement of Article 12.12 in the overall structure of the DSU, suggests that it is a composed panel that is to take the decision to suspend panel proceedings."