

COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

Decision of 6 February 1996

Having regard to agreements¹ which are required to be notified, as the case may be, under Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994, Article V of the General Agreement on Trade in Services or the 1979 Decision on Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries;

Having regard to the biennial reporting envisaged in Paragraph 11 of the Uruguay Round Understanding on the Interpretation of Article XXIV of the GATT 1994; and

Acting pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 7 of Article IV of the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO),

The General Council hereby *decides*:

1. To establish a Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, open to all Members of the WTO, with the following terms of reference:
 - (a) to carry out the examination of agreements in accordance with the procedures and terms of reference adopted by the Council for Trade in Goods, the Council for Trade in Services or the Committee on Trade and Development, as the case may be, and thereafter present its report to the relevant body for appropriate action;²
 - (b) to consider how the required reporting on the operation of such agreements should be carried out and make appropriate recommendations to the relevant body;
 - (c) to develop, as appropriate, procedures to facilitate and improve the examination process;
 - (d) to consider the systemic implications of such agreements and regional initiatives for the multilateral trading system and the relationship between them, and make appropriate recommendations to the General Council; and
 - (e) to carry out any additional functions assigned to it by the General Council.
2. That the Committee shall report annually to the General Council on its activities.

¹The term "agreements" in this Decision refers to all bilateral, regional, and plurilateral trade agreements of a preferential nature.

²The Committee will also carry out the outstanding work of the working parties already established by the Council for Trade in Goods, the Council for Trade in Services or the Committee on Trade and Development, within the terms of reference defined for those working parties, and report to the appropriate bodies.