

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/DS76/4

6 July 1998

(98-2659)

Original: English

JAPAN – MEASURES AFFECTING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Communication from the Chairman of the Panel

The following communication, dated 3 July 1998, addressed to the Dispute Settlement Body, is circulated in accordance with Article 12.9 of the DSU.

Article 12.8 of the DSU stipulates that the period in which the panel shall conduct its examination, from the date that the composition and terms of reference of the panel has been agreed upon until the date the final report is issued to the parties shall, as a general rule, not exceed six months. Pursuant to Article 12.9 of the DSU, when a panel considers that it cannot issue its report within six months, 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.

The Panel on "Japan – Measures Affecting Agricultural Products" was established by the DSB on 18 November 1997, and parties agreed on its composition and terms of reference on 18 December 1998 (WT/DS76/3). I wish to inform you that the Panel has not been able to complete its work within the six months provided for in the DSU. The complexity of the matter and the Panel's decision to seek technical and scientific expertise pursuant to Article 11 of the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Article 13 of the DSU are responsible for this delay.

The Panel intends to finalize its work by the end of October 1998.
