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Committee on Trade and Development

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IMPLEMENTATION OF URUGUAY ROUND PROVISIONS
IN FAVOUR OF DEVELOPING COUNTRY MEMBERS

Addendum

The following communication has been received from the Chairperson of the Council for Trade in Services.

You wrote to me in May concerning the review being carried out by the Committee on Trade and Development of the application of special provisions in WTO Agreements and Ministerial Decisions in favour of developing and least-developed country Members.

I attach a short note describing the action which has been taken under the relevant provisions of the General Agreement on Trade in Services since the entry into force of the Agreement. In some cases, as you will see, these obligations are incumbent upon Members and the action taken has been outside the context of the WTO itself.

Provision	Implementation
<p>The increasing participation of developing countries Members in world trade in services shall be facilitated through a negotiated specific commitments by different Members pursuant to Parts III and IV of the GATS (Article IV:1).</p>	<p>The first set of commitments was negotiated in the Uruguay Round. Subsequently further commitments have been undertaken in the context of extended negotiations on financial services, movement of natural persons and maritime transport. The Council for Trade in Services is required to carry out an assessment of trade in services, with reference to the objectives set out in Article IV:1, <i>inter alia</i>, in the course of its preparation of guidelines for the further round of market access commitments scheduled to begin by the year 2000.</p>
<p>Developed country Members, and to the extent possible, other Members shall establish contact points within two years from the date of entry into force under the WTO Agreement to facilitate the access of developing country Members' service suppliers to information related to their respective markets (Article IV:4).</p>	<p>So far, 17 Members have notified that they have established contact points pursuant to this provision.</p>
<p>The negotiations on disciplines relating to subsidies shall recognize the role of subsidies in relation to the development programmes of developing countries and take into account the needs of Members, particularly developing country Members, for flexibility in this area (Article XV:1).</p>	<p>Work has begun in the Working Party on GATS Rules on the negotiation of disciplines relating to subsidies. Such negotiations will take place pursuant to the mandate of this provision.</p>
<p>Prior to each round of negotiations the Council for Trade in Services shall establish negotiating guidelines which would include modalities for the special treatment for least developed country Members (Article XIX:3).</p>	<p>The Council for Trade in Services is currently discussing proposals relating to preparations for the new round of negotiations due to start in 2000, including a proposal for work on the preparation of negotiating guidelines pursuant to this provision.</p>
<p>Technical assistance to developing countries shall be provided at the multilateral level by the Secretariat and shall be decided upon by the Council for Trade in Services (Article XXV:2).</p>	<p>The Secretariat has been providing technical assistance to developing country Members upon request. No such assistance at the multilateral level has been decided upon by the Council.</p>

Provision	Implementation
Provisions of GATS Telecoms Annex	
Members shall encourage and support telecommunications cooperation among developing countries at the international, regional and sub-regional levels. (Annex on Telecommunications, para. 6(b))	Since the Uruguay Round, several international and regional organizations have sponsored events which give consideration to the coordination of developing country initiatives and strategies on telecommunications. Upon request, the Secretariat has often participated in such activities, providing information on how the GATS relates to the sector. Many Members (both developed and developing) have participated in and supported these activities.
In cooperation with relevant international organizations, Members shall make available, where practicable, to developing countries information with respect to telecommunications services and developments in telecommunications and information technology to assist in strengthening their domestic telecommunications services sector. (Annex on Telecommunications, para. 6(c))	Organizations such as the ITU, UNCTAD and the WTO (under the auspices of the Negotiating Group on Basic Telecommunications) have sponsored information-sharing exercises aimed at making details more readily available on industry developments and national policy reforms in both the telecommunications and information services sectors. As members of the respective organizations, WTO Members have participated in such exercises.
Members shall give special consideration to opportunities for the least-developed countries to encourage foreign suppliers of telecommunications services to assist in the transfer of technology, training and other activities that support the development of their telecommunications infrastructure and expansion of their telecommunications services trade. (Annex on Telecommunications, para. 6(d))	Under the auspices of organizations such as the ITU and the World Bank, Members have supported policies encouraging private sector participation in the enhancement of developing country telecommunications sectors. One result, born out of an ITU initiative, has been the formation of WorldTel, a privately funded investment agency that will provide seed capital for telecom ventures in developing countries with low tele-density levels.
