Today, Mr. Mohamed Ghannouchi, Minister for Economy and Finance of Tunisia, signed Tunisia's Protocol of Accession to GATT. Accession will take effect 30 days after ratification by the Tunisian Legislative Assembly.

The terms of the Protocol were negotiated in a working party whose report was approved by the GATT Council on 20 February 1990. The decision on accession was subsequently taken by GATT Member States in a postal ballot. The necessary two-thirds majority of Contracting Parties - 64 affirmative votes - was attained on 12 March 1990. Since the time-limit given to the Tunisian Government for signing the Protocol of Accession expired on 30 March, on 3 April 1990 the Contracting Parties decided to extend the time-limit until 31 July 1990.

In becoming a member of GATT, Tunisia has agreed to bind more than 900 tariff headings at levels ranging from 17 to 52 per cent, including both industrial and agricultural products. In addition, it has undertaken to abolish import licences or other quantitative restrictions for some tariff headings. Tunisia has stated that these tariff concessions should be seen as its contribution to the Uruguay Round negotiations.

At the Council Session held on 20 February 1990, the Tunisian Minister for the National Economy, said that Tunisia was implementing a national economic restructuring programme in accordance with the spirit and letter of the General Agreement.