FIJI BECOMES A CONTRACTING PARTY TO GATT

GATT now has 112 members. On 16 November 1993, Fiji became a contracting party to GATT following a notification by its Government to the Director-General, Mr. Peter Sutherland. Fiji has acceded under the terms of Article XXVI:5(c) of the General Agreement.

The country became independent from the United Kingdom in 1970. Since that time it has had full autonomy in the conduct of its external commercial relations and has applied the General Agreement on a de facto basis. Under these circumstances, Fiji needed only to notify the GATT Director-General that it wished to be deemed a contracting party, having met the conditions required by Article XXVI:5(c).

With Fiji's accession to GATT, the number of participants in the Uruguay Round is now 116.

Notes to Editors

1. The text of Article XXVI:5(c) of the General Agreement is as follows:

"(c) If any of the customs territories, in respect of which a contracting party has accepted this Agreement, possesses or acquires full autonomy in the conduct of its external commercial relations and of the other matters provided for in this Agreement, such territory shall, upon sponsorship through a declaration by the responsible contracting party establishing the above-mentioned fact, be deemed to be a contracting party."

2. Fiji's main industries are sugar refining and tourism and its main crops are sugar, bananas and ginger. It also produces gold and timber. In 1991, Fiji's exports amounted to US$390 million and its imports totaled $643 million. The country, consisting of more than 300 islands, is located in western South Pacific.