GUINEA-BISSAU BECOMES 118th MEMBER OF THE GATT

On 17 March 1994, Guinea-Bissau became the 118th member of the GATT following its notification to Mr. Peter Sutherland, GATT Director-General, under the terms of Article XXVI:5(c) of the General Agreement.

The Government of Portugal notified the contracting parties on 31 August 1976, that the customs territory of Guinea-Bissau had acquired full autonomy in the conduct of its external commercial relations and other matters provided for in the General Agreement. Since 10 September 1974, Guinea-Bissau has been applying the General Agreement on a de facto basis. Under these circumstances, Guinea-Bissau needed only to notify the GATT Director-General that it wished to be deemed a contracting party according to the provisions of Article XXVI:5(c).

With the accession of Guinea-Bissau, the number of participants in the Uruguay Round is now 120.

Notes to Editors

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

"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. In 1991, the total value of Guinea-Bissau’s imports of goods and services amounted to an estimated US$63 million, primarily composed of foods, transport equipment, fuels and machinery. Imports were mainly from Portugal, Australia, Thailand and the Netherlands. Exports of goods and services in the same year were estimated at a total of US$17.9 million, primarily composed of cashew nuts, frozen fish and shrimp. Exports were mainly to India, Portugal, Spain and France.