COMMUNICATION SUBMITTED BY CAMEROON ON BEHALF OF THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES

ANGOLA, BENIN, BURKINA FASO, CAMEROON, CAPE VERDE, CENTRAL AFRIкан
REPUBLIC, CHAD, COTE D'IVOIRE, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, GABON, GAMBIA,
GHANA, GUINEA, GUINEA BISSAU, LIBERIA, MALI, MAURITANIA, NIGER,
NIGERIA, SAO TOME, SENEGAL, SIERRA LEONE, TOGO AND ZAIRE

The following communication is circulated at the request of the
permanent delegation of Cameroon on behalf of Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso,
Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire,
Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia,
Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and
Zaire to the members of the Group of Negotiations on Services.

1. Since 1975, the above-mentioned countries have been grouped in a
sub-regional organization for maritime co-operation entitled the
Ministerial Conference of West and Central African States on Maritime
Transport.

2. One of the corner-stones of the policy of this group of countries
concerning maritime transport is the United Nations Convention on a Code of
Conduct for Liner Conferences.

3. Among other things, this policy has led to:

- the creation and development of national merchant shipping fleets
  and maritime transport auxiliary activities;

- the establishment of shippers organizations;

- the strengthening of port infrastructure and equipment;

- the establishment of basic and advanced vocational training
  institutions in the field of maritime transport, maritime
  transport auxiliary activities and ports.

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4. The implementation of this policy has allowed:
   - access to freight;
   - negotiation with our partners on such vital issues as freight rates, service quality, rationalization of shipping services, and costs of maritime transport auxiliary activities.

5. All these activities have enabled economic and maritime operators to improve to some extent the competitiveness of export products and reduce the domestic prices of imported goods.

6. Nevertheless, this is a recent and fledgling process which needs to be strengthened in the context of what was previously a captive market from which the countries of the sub-regional were excluded.

7. In this connection, the reaffirmation in July 1991 of the validity and usefulness of the United Nations Convention on a Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences, in particular for many developing countries, is an acknowledgment of this reality by the international maritime community.

8. Consequently, the above-mentioned African countries together emphatically call for this specific circumstance to be taken into account in the results of the current negotiations on the GATS and ask to participate closely in the informal consultations.