

**COMMUNICATION FROM AUSTRALIA AND SINGAPORE**

Elements of a Proposed First Phase for the Services Negotiations  
Mandated under GATS Article XIX

The attached communication has been received from the delegations of Australia and Singapore with the request that it be circulated to Members of the Council for Trade in Services.

1. Australia and Singapore would like to propose that Members adopt a phased approach to the mandated negotiations under Article XIX. This submission focuses on what could constitute the first phase. It in essence provides a "road-map" for the organisation of the work connected with these mandated negotiations.

2. It should be emphasised that the proposal does not prejudice the future elaboration of negotiating guidelines and procedures as required under Article XIX. Indeed, the proposed "road-map" is distinct from these negotiating guidelines and procedures and is only intended to facilitate Members' work in the coming months.

3. Members could agree on the following text:

Pursuant to the objectives of the GATS, as stipulated in the Preamble and Article IV, and the mandate contained in Article XIX, these negotiations shall aim to achieve progressively higher levels of liberalisation of trade in services through the reduction or elimination of the adverse effects on trade of measures as a means of providing effective market access. The negotiations shall take place with due respect for national policy objectives and the level of development of individual Members. In this process, the existing structure and principles of the GATS shall be preserved.

The following programme and arrangements have been agreed for the first phase of these negotiations:

- (a) that proposals would be submitted by Members by the end of December 2000, on the understanding that there would be flexibility for the submission of further or more detailed proposals thereafter;
- (b) that proposals could address the following themes:
  - Modalities of Negotiations

- Increasing Participation of Developing Countries and in particular special treatment for LLDCs<sup>1</sup>
  - Autonomous Liberalisation
  - Systemic Issues
  - Issues arising from the work carried out in the Council for Trade in Services and its subsidiary bodies, including rule-making
- (c) that Special Sessions of the Services Council should be scheduled to systematically consider these themes;
- (d) that the two existing agenda items of the Special Session of the Services Council, namely “Assessment of Trade in Services” and “Work of Subsidiary Bodies - Reports by Chairpersons” would still be retained;
- (e) that a best endeavour deadline of March 2001 be set for the completion of the work in the Committee on Specific Commitments;
- (f) that the second phase of these negotiations would begin with a stock-taking exercise in March 2001, both of progress made in the Special Sessions and the subsidiary bodies, and consideration of how to move forward.
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<sup>1</sup> It is suggested that the proposal on tourism services be taken up under this theme at future meetings.