

## **DECISION ON NEGOTIATIONS ON BASIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

*Ministers decide as follows:*

1. Negotiations shall be entered into on a voluntary basis with a view to the progressive liberalization of trade in telecommunications transport networks and services (hereinafter referred to as "basic telecommunications") within the framework of the General Agreement on Trade in Services.
  2. Without prejudice to their outcome, the negotiations shall be comprehensive in scope, with no basic telecommunications excluded *a priori*.
  3. A Negotiating Group on Basic Telecommunications (hereinafter referred to as the "NGBT") is established to carry out this mandate. The NGBT shall report periodically on the progress of these negotiations.
  4. The negotiations in the NGBT shall be open to all governments and the European Communities which announce their intention to participate. To date, the following have announced their intention to take part in the negotiations:

Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, European Communities and their member States, Finland, Hong Kong, Hungary, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Slovak Republic, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United States.
- Further notifications of intention to participate shall be addressed to the depositary of the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization.
5. The NGBT shall hold its first negotiating session no later than 16 May 1994. It shall conclude these negotiations and make a final report no later than 30 April 1996. The final report of the NGBT shall include a date for the implementation of results of these negotiations.
  6. Any commitments resulting from the negotiations, including the date of their entry into force, shall be inscribed in the Schedules annexed to the General Agreement on Trade in Services and shall be subject to all the provisions of the Agreement.
  7. Commencing immediately and continuing until the implementation date to be determined under paragraph 5, it is understood that no participant shall apply any measure affecting trade in basic telecommunications in such a manner as would improve its negotiating position and leverage. It is understood that this provision shall not prevent the pursuit of commercial and governmental arrangements regarding the provision of basic telecommunications services.
  8. The implementation of paragraph 7 shall be subject to surveillance in the NGBT. Any participant may bring to the attention of the NGBT any action or omission which it believes to be relevant to the fulfilment of paragraph 7. Such notifications shall be deemed to have been submitted to the NGBT upon their receipt by the Secretariat.