

TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

As one of the areas being brought into the GATT for the first time, the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) contains the most comprehensive, global agreement to date on intellectual property.

The Uruguay Round agreement commits each government to protect and enforce intellectual property rights. It includes a set of standards in the areas of copyright, trademarks, geographical indications, integrated circuit designs and trade secrets. It also allows for access to the dispute-settlement provisions under the WTO. Effective protection of intellectual property will provide more certainty for the export of Canadian high-technology products and artistic works, and will also create a better investment climate in Canada for research and development facilities.

DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

The GATT rules on dispute resolution have been strengthened, and their operation streamlined, through the creation of an integrated dispute-settlement mechanism. Dispute resolutions will be accelerated, with a strict time limit established for conclusion of the process once it is under way. Other improvements to the rules will reduce the ability of any one member to block the adoption of a panel or appellate body report. Members also make a commitment to avoid using unilateral retaliation.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

The Uruguay Round outcome includes an agreement that will establish the WTO, an international body that will replace the GATT Secretariat and will oversee and co-ordinate the original GATT agreements and all agreements concluded under the Uruguay Round. The WTO will be overseen by a ministerial conference at least every two years.

A General Council will be established to oversee the operation of the GATT and will include a Dispute Settlement Body and a Trade Policy Review Mechanism. The WTO will also co-ordinate the functioning of the Goods Council, the Services Council and the Intellectual Property Council.

This agreement also sets out proposals to increase the contribution of the GATT to the achievement of greater coherence in global, economic policy making. This requires co-operation with international monetary and fiscal organizations, especially with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.