

Main Products Traded (as % of total)

Exports	1980	1986
Sugar	18.6	6.1
Bananas	17.4	21.4
Fresh shrimp	12.4	20.8
Coffee	2.9	9.5
Fish meal	2.9	0.6
Cocoa	3.4	—
Clothing	2.7	4.2

Imports	1980	1985
Food products	7.5	9.9
Fuels, lubricants and related products	32.1	23.5
Chemical products	10.2	12.1
Transport equipment	20.1	23.6

Membership in International Organizations

Among the key international organizations of which Panama is a member are the United Nations, including most of its specialized agencies, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD-World Bank), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Latin American Economic System (SELA).

Merchandising and Distribution

Foreign firms selling into the Panamanian market almost invariably find that the most efficient way to develop and maintain contact with their clients is through the services of an agent or distributor. Considerable care should, of course, be taken in the selection of such local representatives, not least because representation agreements, once concluded, are difficult to break. The Commercial Section of the Canadian Embassy in Costa Rica will be pleased to assist and advise in the selection of possible agents. Advice is also available from the Honorary Commercial Representative in Panama City.

Exporters should be prepared to visit Panama at least once in the process of selecting representation. Thereafter, periodic visits will continue to be required to maintain momentum. Good quality product literature is an important