

## **CHAPTER FOURTEEN**

### **DISPUTE SETTLEMENT**

#### **ARTICLE 14.1: COOPERATION**

The Parties shall at all times endeavour to agree on the interpretation and application of this Agreement, and shall make every attempt through cooperation and consultations to arrive at a mutually satisfactory resolution of any matter that might affect its operation.

#### **ARTICLE 14.2: SCOPE AND COVERAGE**

1. Unless the Parties otherwise agree elsewhere in this Agreement, this Chapter shall apply with respect to the avoidance or settlement of all disputes between the Parties regarding the implementation, interpretation or application of this Agreement or whenever a Party considers that:

- (a) a measure of the other Party is inconsistent with its obligations under this Agreement;
- (b) the other Party has otherwise failed to carry out its obligations under this Agreement; or
- (c) a benefit the Party could reasonably have expected to accrue to it under Chapters Two (Trade in Goods), Three (Rules of Origins), and Six (Trade in Services) is being nullified or impaired as a result of a measure that is not inconsistent with this Agreement.

2. Unless the Parties otherwise agree, the timeframes and procedural rules set out in this Chapter and its Annex 14-A shall apply to all disputes governed by this Chapter.

3. Arbitral award consisting of findings, determinations and recommendations of an arbitral panel cannot add to or diminish the rights and obligations of the Parties under this Agreement.

4. This Chapter may be invoked in respect of any measure affecting the observance of this Agreement taken by:

- (a) central, regional or local governments or other authorities of a Party; and
- (b) non-governmental bodies in the exercise of powers delegated by central, regional or local governments or other authorities of a Party.

When an arbitral panel has ruled that a provision of this Agreement has not been observed, the Party concerned shall take such reasonable measures as may be available to it to ensure its observance within its territory.

5. The Parties and the arbitral panel appointed under this Chapter shall interpret and apply this Agreement in the light of the objectives of this Agreement and in accordance with customary rules of interpretation of public international law.

#### **ARTICLE 14.3: CHOICE OF FORUM**

1. Disputes regarding any matter covered both by this Agreement and the WTO Agreement or any agreement negotiated thereunder, or any successor agreement thereto, may be settled in the forum selected by the complaining Party.

2. Once dispute settlement procedures are initiated under Article 14.6 or under Article 6 of the *Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes* contained in Annex 2 to the WTO Agreement, the forum thus selected shall be used to the exclusion of the other.

#### ARTICLE 14.4: CONSULTATIONS

1. Either Party may request consultations with the other Party with respect to any matter described in Article 14.2 by delivering written notification to the other Party.

2. If a request for consultations is made, the Party to which the request is made shall reply to the request within ten days after the date of its receipt and shall enter into consultations within 30 days after the date of receipt of the request with a view to reaching a mutually satisfactory solution.

3. The Parties shall make every effort to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution of any matter through consultations. To this end, the Parties shall:

- (a) provide sufficient information to enable a full examination of how the measure is affecting the operation of this Agreement; and
- (b) treat the consultations and the information exchanged therein as confidential.

#### ARTICLE 14.5: GOOD OFFICES, CONCILIATION OR MEDIATION

1. The Parties may at any time agree to good offices, conciliation or mediation. They may begin at any time and be terminated by either Party at any time.

2. Proceedings involving good offices, conciliation or mediation and the particular positions taken by the Parties in these proceedings, shall be confidential and without prejudice to the rights of either Party in any further proceedings under this Chapter or any other proceedings before a forum selected by the Parties.

3. If the Parties agree, procedures for good offices, conciliation or mediation may continue while the dispute proceeds for resolution before an arbitral panel established under Article 14.6.

#### ARTICLE 14.6: REQUEST FOR AN ARBITRAL PANEL

1. A Party may request in writing for the establishment of an arbitral panel, if the matter has not been resolved under Article 14.4 within 45 days after the date of receipt of the request for consultations.

2. A request for arbitration shall give the reasons for the complaint including the identification of the measure at issue and indication of the legal basis of the complaint.

3. Unless the Parties otherwise agree, an arbitral panel shall be established upon delivery of the request and perform its functions in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter.

#### ARTICLE 14.7: COMPOSITION OF ARBITRAL PANELS

1. The arbitral panel referred to in Article 14.6 shall normally consist of three members. Each Party shall appoint a member within 30 days of the receipt of the request

under Article 14.6. The Parties shall jointly appoint the third member, who shall serve as the chair of the arbitral panel, within 30 days after the appointment of the second member. If either Party fails to appoint its member within such period, the member appointed by the other Party shall act as the sole arbitrator.

2. If the Parties are unable to agree on the chair of the arbitral panel, they shall, within the next ten days, exchange their respective lists comprising four nominees each who shall not be nationals of either Party. The chair shall then be appointed in the presence of both Parties by draw of lot from the lists within 40 days from the date of appointment of the second member. If a Party fails to submit its list of four nominees, the chair shall be appointed by draw of lot from the list already submitted by the other Party.

3. If a member of the arbitral panel appointed under this Article becomes unable to act, a successor shall be appointed in the same manner as prescribed for the appointment of the original member and the successor shall have all the powers and duties of the original member. In such a case, any time period applicable to the arbitral panel proceedings shall be suspended for a period beginning the date when the original member becomes unable to act and ending on the date when the new member is appointed.

4. If the sole arbitrator or the chair appointed in accordance with paragraph 1 or 2 is replaced, any hearings held previously shall be repeated. If any member of the arbitral panel is replaced, such hearings may be repeated at the discretion of the arbitral panel.

5. Any person appointed as a member of the arbitral panel shall have expertise or experience in law, international trade, other matters covered by this Agreement or the resolution of disputes arising under international trade agreements. A member shall be chosen strictly on the basis of impartiality, objectivity, reliability, sound judgment and independence and shall conduct himself or herself on the same basis throughout the course of the arbitration proceedings. If a Party believes that a member is in violation of the basis stated above, the Parties shall consult and if they agree, the member shall be replaced by a new member in accordance with this Article. Unless the Parties agree otherwise, the chair shall not have his or her usual place of residence in the territory of, nor be employed by, either Party.

#### ARTICLE 14.8: TERMINATION OF PROCEEDINGS

The Parties may agree to terminate the proceedings before an arbitral panel at any time by jointly notifying the chair to this effect. The arbitration proceedings may be terminated at any time, but before issuance of the initial report under Article 14.11, if the complaining Party withdraws its complaint.

#### ARTICLE 14.9: PROCEEDINGS OF ARBITRAL PANELS

1. Unless the Parties otherwise agree, the arbitral panel shall follow the model rules of procedure in the Annex 14-A, which shall ensure:

- (a) confidentiality of the proceedings and all written submissions to, and communications with, the panel;
- (b) that the arbitral panel meets in closed session;
- (c) a right to at least one hearing before the arbitral panel;
- (d) an opportunity for each Party to provide initial and rebuttal submissions;
- (e) that a Party may make available to the public at any time its own written

submissions, subject to subparagraph (g);

- (f) a reasonable opportunity for each Party to submit comments on the initial report presented pursuant to Article 14.11.3; and
- (g) the protection of confidential information.

2. The arbitral panel may, after consulting the Parties, adopt additional rules of procedure not inconsistent with this Chapter and the model rules of procedure in the Annex 14-A.

#### ARTICLE 14.10: INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ADVICE

1. Upon the request of a Party, or on its own initiative, the arbitral panel may seek information or technical advice from any person or body that it deems appropriate, provided that the Parties so agree. Any information or technical advice so obtained shall be made available to the Parties.

2. With respect to factual issues concerning a scientific or other technical matter raised by a Party, the arbitral panel may request advisory reports in writing from an expert or experts. The arbitral panel may, at the request of a Party or on its own initiative, select, in consultation with the Parties, scientific or technical experts who shall assist the arbitral panel throughout its proceedings, but who shall not have the right to vote in respect of any decision to be made by the arbitral panel.

#### ARTICLE 14.11: INITIAL REPORT

1. Unless the Parties otherwise agree, the arbitral panel shall base its report on the relevant provisions of this Agreement, on the submissions and arguments of the Parties, and on any information before it, pursuant to Article 14.10.

2. Unless the Parties otherwise agree, the arbitral panel shall, within 90 days after the last member is appointed, present to the Parties an initial report containing:

- (a) findings of fact and/or law together with reasons;
- (b) its determination as to the implementation, interpretation or application of this Agreement or whether the measure at issue is inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement or causes nullification or impairment of any benefit accruing to a Party under this Agreement, or any other determination requested in the terms of reference; and
- (c) its recommendations, if any, on the means to resolve the dispute.

3. The Parties may submit written comments on the initial report within 14 days of its presentation.

4. In case that such written comments by the Parties are received as provided for in paragraph 3, the arbitral panel, on its own initiative or at the request of a Party, may reconsider its report and make any further examination that it considers appropriate after taking into account written comments.

#### ARTICLE 14.12: FINAL REPORT

1. The arbitral panel shall present its final report to the Parties, within 30 days of presentation of the initial report, unless the Parties otherwise agree.

2. The final report of the arbitral panel shall be made public within 15 days of its delivery to the Parties.

#### ARTICLE 14.13: IMPLEMENTATION OF FINAL REPORT

1. The final report of an arbitral panel shall be binding on the Parties and shall not be subject to appeal.

2. On receipt of the final report of an arbitral panel, the Parties shall agree on:

- (a) the means to resolve the dispute as per the determinations or recommendations, if any, of the arbitral panel; and
- (b) the reasonable period of time necessary to implement the report to resolve the dispute. If the Parties fail to agree on the reasonable period of time, either Party may request the original arbitral panel to determine the length of such period, in the light of the particular circumstances of the case. The arbitral panel shall present its determination within 15 days after submission of the request.

3. If, in its final report, the arbitral panel determines that a Party is not in conformity with its obligations under this Agreement or that a Party's measure has caused nullification or impairment, the means to resolve the dispute shall, wherever possible, be to eliminate the non-conformity or the nullification or impairment.

#### ARTICLE 14.14: NON-IMPLEMENTATION: COMPENSATION AND SUSPENSION OF BENEFITS

1. If the Parties:

- (a) are unable to agree on the means to resolve the dispute pursuant to Article 14.13. 2(a) within 30 days of issuance of the final report; or
- (b) have agreed on the means to resolve the dispute pursuant to Article 14.13, but the responding Party fails to implement the aforesaid means within 30 days following the expiration of the reasonable period of time determined in accordance with Article 14.13.2(b);

the responding Party shall, if requested, enter into negotiations with the complaining Party with a view to reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement on any necessary compensatory adjustment.

2. If no mutually satisfactory agreement on compensation is reached within 20 days after the Parties have entered into negotiations on compensatory adjustment, the complaining Party may at any time thereafter serve written notice on the responding Party that it intends to suspend the application to that Party of benefits of equivalent effect. The notice shall specify the level of benefits that the complaining Party proposes to suspend. The complaining Party may begin suspension of benefits 30 days after the date when it served notice on the responding Party under this paragraph, or the date when the arbitral panel issues the report under paragraph 6, whichever is later.

3. Any suspension of benefits shall be restricted to benefits granted to the responding Party under this Agreement.

4. In considering what benefits to suspend under paragraph 2:

- (a) the complaining Party should first seek to suspend benefits in the same sector or sectors as that affected by the measure or other matter that the arbitral panel has found to be inconsistent with this Agreement or to have caused nullification or impairment; and/or
- (b) the complaining Party may suspend benefits in other sectors, if it considers that it is not practicable or effective to suspend benefits in the same sector.

5. The suspension of benefits shall be temporary and shall only be applied until such time as the measure found to be inconsistent with this Agreement, or to have caused nullification or impairment, has been removed, or a mutually satisfactory solution is reached.

6. If the responding Party considers that:

- (a) the level of benefits that the complaining Party has proposed to be suspended is manifestly excessive; or
- (b) it has eliminated the non-conformity, nullification or impairment that the arbitral panel has found;

it may request the original arbitral panel to determine the matter. The original arbitral panel shall present its determination to the Parties within 30 days after it is reconvened.

7. Where there is disagreement as to the existence, or consistency with this Agreement, of measures taken to comply with the determinations or recommendations of the arbitral panel, such dispute shall be decided through recourse to the dispute settlement procedures under this Chapter, including, wherever possible resort to the original arbitral panel. The arbitral panel shall provide its report to the Parties within 60 days after the date of referral of the matter to it.

8. If the arbitral panel cannot be reconvened with its original members, the procedures for appointment of the arbitral panel set out in Article 14.7 shall be applied.

#### ARTICLE 14.15: OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

1. All proceedings and all documents submitted to the arbitral panel shall be in the English language.

2. When an original document submitted to the arbitral panel by a Party is not in English, that Party shall translate it into English and submit it together with the original document.

#### ARTICLE 14.16: EXPENSES

1. Unless the Parties otherwise agree, the costs of the arbitral panel and other expenses associated with the conduct of its proceedings shall be borne in equal parts by both Parties.

2. Each Party shall bear its own expenses and legal costs in the arbitral proceedings.