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Trade Negotiations Committee
Negotiating Group on Market Access

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MARKET ACCESS FOR NON-AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a Newly Acceded Member

Communication from Saudi Arabia

The following communication, dated 23 August, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of Saudi Arabia.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia submits for the consideration of the Negotiating Group its position with regard to its treatment as a Newly Acceded Member (NAM).

The Kingdom formally acceded to the World Trade Organization on 11 December 2005. The extensive commitments and reforms of its trade regime are embodied in its protocol of accession (WT/L/627, 11 November 2005) and Working Party Report and annexes and, schedules thereto (WT/ACC/SAU/61, WT/ACC/SAU/61/Add.1 and WT/ACC/SAU/61/Add.2, 28 October 2005). This accession followed 13 years of arduous negotiations, including 38 bilateral agreements with Members.

At the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, Sixth Session, Minister of Commerce and Industry H.E. Dr Hashim A. Yamani stated the position of the Kingdom in the plenary session on 17 December 2005:

To join this Conference as a full Member, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made extensive commitments on goods, services and Intellectual Property Rights. We bound tariffs on practically all agricultural and non-agricultural products at very low rates, and made commitments on some 110 sub-sectors of services with few limitations. We trust that, as one of the newest Members of this organization, we will neither be asked nor expected to make any further concessions or commitments.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hereby reaffirms this position.

It should also be noted that for some items the agreed upon five-year phase out of reductions is in progress.

The present levels, it should be noted, are well below the levels of many, if not most, Members.

In view of these considerations, especially the proximity in time of accession – only six months – it would not be fair or appropriate to require further reductions.

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This position will also be presented to the negotiating groups on Agriculture and Services, since the Kingdom made substantial concessions in these areas as well.

The Kingdom also wishes to clarify that this position is without prejudice to the positions of other Members which acceded to the WTO prior to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
