

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES – REGIME FOR THE IMPORTATION, SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF BANANAS

Recourse to Article 21.5 of the DSU by Ecuador

Request to Join Consultations

Communication from Panama

The following communication, dated 11 December 2006, from the delegation of Panama to the delegation of the European Communities, the delegation of Ecuador and to the Chairman of the Dispute Settlement Body, is circulated in accordance with Article 4.11 of the DSU.

The Government of Panama takes note of the revised request for consultations made by Ecuador on 28 November 2006 in the matter of *European Communities – Regime for the Importation, Sale and Distribution of Bananas – Recourse to Article 21.5 of the DSU by Ecuador* (WT/DS27/65/Rev.1). Given Panama's "principal supplying interest" in the export of bananas to the EC market, Panama hereby requests to join in the consultations pursuant to paragraphs 10 and 11 of Article 4 of the *Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes* (DSU).

Bananas are Panama's single most important agricultural crop, representing nearly 16% of its agricultural output and 58% of its total agricultural exports. Nearly all of Panama's banana exports are shipped to the EC market. Its banana sector is one of Panama's most important sources of employment, especially in the poorest rural regions of the country.

On 19 January 2006, without prejudice to all legal rights and interests, Panama participated with Honduras and Nicaragua in consultations with the EC under the authority of Article 21.5 to discuss the EC's discriminatory banana measures. At that time, and in other exchanges since then, the EC made clear that it is not prepared to do anything more than "monitor" its current access arrangement.

Panama accordingly continues to have a strong interest in participating as fully as possible in the Article 21.5 consultation and review process, and in seeking a resolution of this disagreement on the promptest possible basis.
