4. Unless otherwise agreed by the Contracting Parties, all submissions of documents shall be made and all hearings shall be completed within a period of six months from the date of selection of the third arbitrator, and the arbitration board shall reach its decision by a majority of votes within two months from the date of the final submissions of documents or the date of the closing of the hearings, whichever is later. Such decision shall be final and binding.

5. Each Contracting Party shall bear the cost of the arbitrator of its choice and its representation in the arbitral proceedings. The cost of the President of the arbitration board in discharging his or her duties and the remaining costs of the arbitration board shall be borne equally by the Contracting Parties.

Article 17
Settlement of Investment Disputes
between a Contracting Party and an Investor
of the Other Contracting Party

1. For the purposes of this Article, "investment dispute" is a dispute between a Contracting Party and an investor of the other Contracting Party that has incurred loss or damage by reason of, or arising out of, an alleged breach of any obligation of the former Contracting Party under this Agreement with respect to the investor of that other Contracting Party or its investments in the Area of the former Contracting Party.

2. Subject to subparagraph 7(b), nothing in this Article shall be construed so as to prevent an investor who is a party to an investment dispute (hereinafter referred to in this Article as "disputing investor") from seeking administrative or judicial settlement within the Area of the Contracting Party that is a party to the investment dispute (hereinafter referred to in this Article as "disputing Party").

3. Any investment dispute shall, as far as possible, be settled amicably through consultations between the disputing investor and the disputing Party (hereinafter referred to in this Article as "the disputing parties").

4. If the investment dispute cannot be settled through such consultations within three months from the date on which the disputing investor requested in writing the disputing Party for consultations, the disputing investor may, subject to subparagraph 7(a), submit the investment dispute to one of the following international arbitrations:

(a) arbitration in accordance with the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States, done at Washington, March 18, 1965 (hereinafter referred to in this Article as "the ICSID Convention"), so long as the ICSID Convention is in force between the Contracting Parties;

(b) arbitration under the Additional Facility Rules of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, provided that either Contracting Party, but not both, is a party to the ICSID Convention;

(c) arbitration under the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law; and

(d) if agreed with the disputing Party, any arbitration in accordance with other arbitration rules.

5. Each Contracting Party hereby consents to the submission of an investment dispute by a disputing investor to arbitration set forth in paragraph 4 chosen by the disputing investor.

6. Notwithstanding paragraph 5, no investment disputes may be submitted to arbitration set forth in paragraph 4, if more than three years have elapsed since the date on which the disputing investor acquired or should have first acquired, whichever is the earlier, the knowledge that the disputing investor had incurred loss or damage referred to in paragraph 1.

7. (a) In the event that an investment dispute has been submitted to courts of justice, administrative tribunals or agencies or any other binding dispute settlement mechanism established under the laws and regulations of the disputing Party, any arbitration set forth in paragraph 4 can be sought only if the disputing investor withdraws, in accordance with the laws and regulations of the disputing Party, its claim from such domestic remedies before the final decisions are made therein.