ARTICLE 21.16

Rules of interpretation

The panel shall interpret the covered provisions in accordance with customary rules of interpretation of public international law including those codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. The panel shall also take into account relevant interpretations in panel and Appellate Body reports adopted by the DSB.

ARTICLE 21.17

Receipt of information

1. On request of a Party, or on its own initiative, the panel may seek from the Parties relevant information it considers necessary and appropriate. The Parties shall respond promptly and fully to any request by the panel for information.

2. On request of a Party, or on its own initiative, the panel may seek from any source any information, including confidential information, it considers appropriate. The panel also has the right to seek the opinion of experts as it considers appropriate.

3. Natural persons of a Party or legal persons established in a Party may submit *amicus curiae* briefs to the panel in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

4. Any information obtained by the panel under this Article shall be made available to the Parties and the Parties may submit comments on that information to the panel.

ARTICLE 21.18

Interim report

1. The panel shall issue an interim report to the Parties setting out a descriptive part and its findings and conclusions no later than 120 days after the date of its establishment in a manner enabling the Parties to review it. When the panel considers that this deadline cannot be met, the chairperson of the panel shall notify the Parties in writing, stating the reasons for the delay and the date on which the panel plans to issue its interim report. Under no circumstances shall the delay exceed 30 days after the deadline.

2. Each Party may submit to the panel written comments and a written request to review precise aspects of the interim report no later than 15 days after the date of issuance of the interim report. After considering any written comments and requests by each Party on the interim report, the panel may modify the interim report and make any further examination it considers appropriate.