the Parties to the dispute shall, as a general rule, not exceed seven months.

5. A panel reconvened pursuant to Article 19.16 (Compliance Review) or paragraph 13 of Article 19.17 (Compensation and Suspension of Concessions or Other Obligations) shall, as soon as practicable and whenever possible within 15 days of the date of its reconvening, fix the timetable for the compliance review process taking into account the periods of time specified in Article 19.16 (Compliance Review).

Panel Proceedings

6. The panel shall make its findings and determinations by consensus, provided that where the panel is unable to reach consensus, it may make its findings and determinations by majority vote. A panellist may furnish dissenting or separate opinions on matters not unanimously agreed. Opinions expressed by an individual panellist in the report shall be anonymous.

7. Panel deliberations shall be confidential. The Parties to the dispute and Third Parties shall be present only when invited by the panel to appear before it.

8. There shall be no *ex parte* communications with the panel concerning matters under consideration by it.

Submissions

9. Each Party to the dispute shall have the opportunity to set out in writing the facts of its case, its arguments and counter arguments. Further to paragraphs 4 and 5, the timetable fixed by the panel shall include precise deadlines for submissions by the Parties to the dispute and Third Parties.

Hearings

10. Further to paragraphs 4 and 5, the timetable fixed by the panel shall provide for at least one hearing for the Parties to the dispute to present their case to the panel. As a general rule, the timetable shall not provide more than two hearings unless special circumstances exist.

Confidentiality

11. Written submissions to the panel shall be treated as confidential, but shall be made available to the Parties to the dispute and, where provided for in Article 19.10 (Third Parties), the Third Parties. The Parties to the dispute, the Third Parties, and the panel shall treat as confidential, information submitted by a Party to the dispute or a Third Party to the panel which that Party has designated as confidential. For greater certainty, nothing in this paragraph shall preclude a Party to the dispute or a Third Party from disclosing statements of its own positions to the public, provided that there is no disclosure of statements or information submitted by a Party to the dispute or a Third Party to the panel which that Party has designated as confidential. A Party to the dispute or a Third Party shall, on request of a Party, provide a non-confidential summary of the information contained in its written submissions that could be disclosed to the public.

Additional Information and Technical Advice

12. Each Party to the dispute and each Third Party shall respond promptly and fully to any request by a panel for such information as the panel considers necessary and appropriate.

13. On request of a Party to the dispute or on its own initiative, a panel may seek additional information and technical advice from any individual or body which it deems appropriate. However, before doing so the panel shall seek the views of the Parties to the dispute. Where the Parties to the dispute agree that the panel should not seek the additional information or technical advice, the panel shall not do so. The panel shall provide the Parties to the dispute with any additional information or technical advice it receives and an opportunity to provide comments. Where the panel takes into account the additional information or technical advice in preparation of its report, it shall also take into account any comments by a Party to the dispute on the additional information or technical advice.

Reports of the Panel

14. The panel established pursuant to Article 19.11 (Establishment and Reconvening of a Panel) shall issue its interim report to the Parties to the dispute within 150 days of the date of its establishment. In cases of urgency including those which concern perishable goods, the panel shall endeavour to issue its interim report within 90 days of the date of its establishment.