NEW MEMBERSHIP

Note by the Secretary-General

In the present report, the Secretary-General informs the Council on the membership applications submitted since its last session, and takes stock of the changes in the composition of the Organization since the last session of the Assembly.
NEW MEMBERSHIP

1. The purpose of the present document is to inform the Executive Council of the applications for full membership which the Assembly will be called upon to consider at its sixteenth session, and of the changes that have occurred in the composition of the Organization since the fifteenth session of the General Assembly.

I. MEMBERSHIPS SINCE THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2. It is recalled that the admission of Oman as a Full Member of WTO took effect on 9 July 2004, following approval by the Council in accordance with the mandate it had received from the Assembly.

3. Likewise, on 23 September 2004, Australia, in accordance with Article 5.2 of the Statutes, rejoined the Organization, upon receipt of the formal letter whereby it accepted the Statutes of the Organization.

4. The Council took note of these two admissions at its sessions in Hyderabad in July 2004 and in Salvador de Bahia in November 2004.

5. The Members of the Council will recall that the fifteenth session of the General Assembly (Beijing, October 2003) approved the admission of Latvia, noting that such membership would take effect starting 1 January 2005.

6. The total number of Member States of the Organization is therefore 145 at the date of the present document.

II. CANDIDATURES FOR MEMBERSHIP

7. In a letter dated 27 August 2004, the Minister for Culture and Tourism of Papua New Guinea, H.E. David Basua, transmitted to the Secretariat his Government's formal acceptance of the Statutes of the Organization and the obligations of membership. This candidature is subject to ratification by the General Assembly at its next session, pursuant to Article 5.3 of the Statutes. This State is a member of the Organization of the United Nations.
8. The Prime Minister of Timor-Leste has also sent to the Secretariat a communication dated 14 February 2005, whereby his Government formally accepted the Statutes of the Organization and the obligations of membership. This candidature is subject to ratification by the General Assembly at its next session, pursuant to Article 5.3 of the Statutes. This State is a member of the Organization of the United Nations.

III. APPLICATIONS IN PROGRESS

9. The Parliament of Belarus has recently accepted the Statutes of WTO. This acceptance is to be ratified shortly by the President of the Republic in order to conclude the necessary procedure for admission, which should be completed by the time the Council session convenes. It is recalled that, through resolution 449(XV), the Assembly gave the Council a mandate to admit this State once the formal requirements have been fulfilled. This procedure may or may not be used depending on the date of reception of the official candidature of Belarus.

10. At the first National Tourism Conference, held in London on 16 March 2005, H.E. Mr. Richard Caborn, Minister for Sport and Tourism of the United Kingdom announced that his country would be joining the Organization shortly. The Secretariat is currently following up on this statement so that this State can rejoin the Organization under Article 5.2 of the Statutes, given the fact that the United Kingdom was a member of the International Union of Official Tourist Organizations (IUOTO) at the date of the adoption of the Statutes of WTO.