

117

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

TNB/18

30 May 1958

Limited Distribution

TARIFF NEGOTIATIONS WITH BRAZIL

Tariff Negotiations Committee

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TENTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Friday, 9 May 1958 at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. FINN GUNDELACH (Denmark)

Subject discussed: Progress of the negotiations and target date for their conclusion

The representative of Brazil referred to the slow progress made in the three months since the opening of the negotiations. However, with Australia, Canada, Finland, France, India, Italy and Sweden, he stated, a satisfactory conclusion in the near future could be expected. The negotiation with the United States was showing progress: Brazil had recently increased its original offers. A somewhat slower but normal pace marked the negotiations with Australia, Benelux, Czechoslovakia and Japan. Discussions with the United Kingdom had been suspended because of unforeseen circumstances; the United Kingdom delegation would, however, soon be returning to Geneva after having studied the Brazilian offers. No forecast could yet be made with respect to the negotiations with Denmark and Norway. Negotiations had not yet been started with Chile, the Dominican Republic, Peru and Uruguay. The Greek Government had indicated that it saw no scope for negotiations in view of the small volume of trade with Brazil. The Governments of New Zealand and South Africa were only concerned with what advantages they would receive from indirect concessions.

The Brazilian delegation felt that after three months the negotiations had reached a point at which it would be appropriate to fix a date by which they should be concluded and proposed that bilateral contacts be intensified so as to terminate all negotiations by 31 May 1958.

The representative of Canada indicated that they expected to come to an agreement with Brazil in the following week.

The representative of the United States, in stating his views, referred to the complex nature of tariff negotiations: past experience had shown what a time consuming process this was. In the case of Brazil the wide range of the trade between them, and the adoption by Brazil of a completely new nomenclature made the negotiation particularly complex. Therefore, although much work had been

put into this negotiation he was doubtful whether all possibilities could be exhausted by 31 May. He did not see how a date for closure of the negotiations could be fixed at this point. Having been asked to make a counter-proposal, he suggested that a tentative "target" could be fixed at 15 June, subject to review as the negotiations proceeded.

The representative of the United Kingdom held a position similar to that of the United States. Negotiations could, and often did, take unexpected turns which made it impossible to fix a date by which they should be concluded. In their negotiation with Brazil a prompt conclusion was certainly possible, but this would depend on eventualities. He was in full agreement with any suggestion that everything possible should be done to hasten a conclusion, but he thought the end of May might prove to be too early: it might be more realistic to aim at mid-June.

The representative of Australia held similar views. Although the trade between Australia and Brazil was not very large he was not in a position to say when agreement could be reached. He informed the Committee that a tariff expert would arrive in Geneva towards the end of May.

The representative of the Benelux countries indicated that their negotiations might perhaps be concluded by the end of May. He did not favour the fixing of a terminal date, but thought that a further meeting of the Committee should be held in the near future.

The representative of Brazil regretted that his proposal was not acceptable to the United States because theirs was the key negotiation on which the progress of other negotiations to some extent depended. He appreciated the difficulties of previous speakers, but wished to emphasize his Government's very strong desire that the negotiations be finished by the end of May. Naturally, in view of their desire that the negotiations be concluded successfully, the result should not be prejudiced for lack of a few more days. The absence of favourable response to his proposal that 31 May be fixed as the closing date, induced him to suggest that the Committee hold another meeting on 23 May.

After a further discussion the Committee agreed to the Chairman's proposal to fix 15 June 1958 as a target date for the conclusion of the negotiations and to hold a meeting of the Committee later in May by which time firmer conclusions could be arrived at.