

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

TNS/5

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TARIFF NEGOTIATIONS FOR  
THE ACCESSION OF SWITZERLAND

Tariff Negotiations Committee

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held at the Bâtiment Electoral, Geneva  
on Tuesday, 20 May 1958, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Finn Gundelach (Denmark)

- Subjects discussed:
1. Election of Chairman
  2. Composition of Tariff Negotiations Committee
  3. Statement by the Representative of Switzerland
  4. Procedures of negotiations
  5. Exchange of Lists of Offers
  6. Security arrangements
  7. Scheduling of meetings
  8. Duration of conference

### 1. Election of Chairman

Mr. Finn GUNDELACH (Denmark) was unanimously elected Chairman of the Committee. It was agreed that in the case of any absence of Mr. Gundelach the Committee would either elect a Vice-Chairman or, at each meeting, choose its Chairman for that meeting.

### 2. Composition of Tariff Negotiations Committee

The Governments of Chile and Haiti have notified their intention to participate in the negotiations and are to be added to the lists of members of the Committee (TNS/4, paragraph 1).

### 3. Statement by the Representative of Switzerland

Mr. SCHAFFNER (Switzerland) stated that, on 17 November 1956 the CONTRACTING PARTIES agreed to enter into tariff negotiations with Switzerland with a view to the provisional accession of Switzerland to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. It was decided that these negotiations should be based on the new tariff which was approved in November of last year by the Swiss Federal Council.

This draft tariff was submitted to the contracting parties during the Twelfth Session. Most of the mutual lists of requests had been exchanged in the meantime. According to the rules of GATT, Switzerland had drawn up offer lists and was ready to exchange these lists and to begin the negotiations immediately. Because of the intensity of Switzerland's foreign trade, the request lists had proved to be quite substantial. The Swiss Government, however, had taken the necessary measures to permit several negotiations to proceed simultaneously in order to reduce the duration of the talks as far as possible. His delegation would be divided into a number of teams.

At a time when substantial changes were in view in the field of tariffs, Switzerland would like to express her confidence in a world-wide trade organization through the tariff negotiations within the framework of GATT. Switzerland had always pleaded for the freedom and liberalization of international trade on a world-wide scale. For many years the work on the new and over-due Swiss tariff had been going on. Switzerland did not want to put this new tariff before Parliament at the end of this year and put it into effect unilaterally without first having submitted it to an extensive international discussion by means of the forthcoming tariff negotiations. She would thus like to prove her willingness to find as liberal solutions as possible within the framework of an international collaboration on a world-wide basis.

His Government wished to take the opportunity to welcome on this occasion all the delegates who had come to Switzerland for these talks.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the Committee's appreciation of the statement made by the Swiss representative.

#### 4. Procedures of negotiations

Before opening the discussion of detailed points of procedure, the CHAIRMAN wished to recall to the Committee the different types of negotiations which could be conducted within the framework of the General Agreement. One type was that of negotiations for accession; and it was such negotiations which members of the Committee would be conducting with Switzerland. The relevant procedure as laid down by the CONTRACTING PARTIES were contained in Basic Instruments and Selected Documents (1952 Edition) on pages 110 to 115; these incorporated, by reference, Section II (as above, pages 104 to 106) of the Procedures adopted for the Torquay Tariff Conference. It could be seen that these negotiations differed in one fundamental respect from those which took place between governments which were already contracting parties. This was made clear by paragraph 5 of the Torquay procedures where it was provided that account should be taken by acceding governments in their negotiations with contracting parties of the indirect benefits they would enjoy as a result of the concessions exchanged in previous GATT tariff

conferences. In effect, therefore, the negotiations would have a two-fold character: on the one hand the balancing of concessions by Switzerland with the indirect benefits Switzerland would receive from the existing body of concessions of contracting parties and, on the other hand, the balancing of new "supplementary" concessions.

Another technical point he wished to mention was the established principle whereby the offers made by each participating government should be based on the assumption that all requests made by that participating government would be met. This was in keeping with the multilateral character of the negotiations in that every delegation could by examining all lists of offers exchanged form from the outset a fair picture of the scope of the negotiations. It also followed from this that all changes (additions, modifications or deletions) in the original lists of offers (and of requests) should be made known, through the secretariat, to all negotiating delegations.

5. Exchange of Lists of offers (TNS/4, paragraph 3)

The Committee approved the procedures for the exchange of offers as proposed with the amendment that the number of copies of each list of offers to be sent to the secretariat for distribution should be twenty-five (instead of twenty).

6. Security arrangements (TNS/4, paragraph 4)

The Committee approved the security arrangements proposed in document TNS/4.

M. ROYER (Deputy Executive Secretary) pointed out that although the security arrangements proposed in TNS/4 were not as strict as those which had been adopted for some of the earlier tariff conferences, it was no less important that scrupulous attention be paid to the safe-keeping of information relating to the negotiations. In particular, he would suggest that delegations avoid, as far as possible, receiving in the Bâtiment Electoral visits of persons not connected with the negotiations.

7. Scheduling of meetings (TNS/4, paragraph 5)

The following dates were agreed for the exchange of offers with Switzerland:

Austria	19 June	- informal contacts would proceed in the meantime
Benelux	---	- the representative of the Benelux Governments would notify the secretariat as to the date on which they would be able to exchange offers

Brazil	2 June	
Chile	---	- not established
Dominican Republic	---	- not established
Finland	9 June	
France	16/17 June	
Germany	29 May	
Haiti	---	- not established
India	---	- not established
Italy	20 June	
Turkey	9 June	
United Kingdom	17 June	

The negotiating governments not mentioned above would exchange offers with Switzerland in the next few days.

#### 8. Duration of Conference

It was not possible to make an estimate of the duration of the conference. The Deputy Executive Secretary pointed out, however, that the Bâtiment Electoral would not be available after the month of August.