

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

Preferential Arrangements Among
Developing Countries Negotiated in GATT

COMMITTEE OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Summary of Discussion at Third Meeting
held on 14 January 1974

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The third meeting of the Committee of Participating Countries provided for in the Protocol Relating to Trade Negotiations among Developing Countries was held under the chairmanship of Mr. L.A. Pereira Souto Maior (Brazil).
2. The proposed agenda for the meeting contained in document CPC/W/5 was adopted.

Special meeting of the Committee of Participating Countries

3. In introducing the item, the Chairman referred to the discussions which had taken place at the special meeting of the Committee in November 1973 concerning possibilities for the further expansion of trade among developing countries. A summary of these discussions had been circulated in document CPC/S/2 and at the request of that meeting, the secretariat had also circulated a note (CPC/S/1) on possible procedures for accession and steps that would serve to facilitate the process of accession to the Protocol. The Chairman suggested that the Committee might wish to exchange views on the results of the special meeting and give some thought to future work which might be taken up in this context.
4. Members generally supported the proposal made for a new round of trade negotiations among interested developing countries with a view to extending the list of concessions and encouraging the accession of additional developing countries to the Protocol. It was stated that technical assistance by the secretariat had made a valuable contribution to the earlier round of trade negotiations among developing countries and was proving most helpful in the context of the current multilateral trade negotiations. Some members enquired about the technical assistance which might be provided in connexion with a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries. The representative of the secretariat recalled that in the initial round of negotiations, the secretariat had provided assistance to developing countries which had helped them to identify their interests in the negotiations and helped to facilitate the negotiating process. Extensive statistical data, details of import régimes etc. were made available to interested developing countries. However, it would seem in the present context, that

developing countries would first need to decide on the initiative they would wish to take in entering into a new round of negotiations. In the light of this, the form of assistance which the secretariat could provide within the limits of its resources could be more clearly identified.

5. Some members suggested that a further special meeting of the Committee of Participating Countries, to which non-participating developing countries would be invited, might be held in March 1974. Among other things, such a meeting would provide an opportunity for promoting the possibility of enlarging the schedules of concessions and encouraging further accessions. Delegations should be encouraged to exchange views on these possibilities, where possible, on the basis of instructions from governments.

6. In summing up the discussions, the Chairman noted the consensus that a further special meeting of the Committee might be convened during March. The agenda for the meeting would, inter alia, provide an opportunity for delegations to put forward specific suggestions and raise specific problems which their governments may have in participating in a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries. The meeting might also wish to consider the possibility of initiating a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries as provided for in paragraph 6 of the Protocol. With a view to facilitating discussion at the special meeting, informal contacts with interested developing countries by participating countries and by the secretariat should be encouraged.

Ratification of the Protocol

7. The representative of Mexico stated that the Senate of his country had completed ratification procedures although certain administrative formalities remained to be concluded before final acceptance of the Protocol which was expected to take place in the near future. The representative of Chile stated that his country was also proceeding with ratification procedures which it was hoped could be completed soon. The representative of Greece stated that because of certain unforeseen circumstances, the Greek authorities had not yet completed the formalities required for ratification of the Protocol but were making efforts to finalize these as soon as possible.

Certification of origin

8. The Committee had before it a list of documents containing information provided by participating countries on their rules and procedures for certification of origin. The Committee was informed that the secretariat would issue a consolidated document on the rules and certification of origin of participating countries as early as possible in 1974. To help in the preparation of the document, participating countries which had not yet supplied all the necessary information were invited to do so at an early date.

9. The representative of Greece stated that his delegation had taken steps to obtain certain required information regarding certification of origin from the competent authorities in his country. The representative of Israel stated that a decree stipulating the modalities of the preferential duties provided for in the Protocol and the relevant rules of origin was published on 14 December 1973 and that the official English translation thereof would be communicated within a short time to the secretariat for circulation to participating countries.

10. Because the practical application of the Protocol was still in its early stages, it was suggested that it might be a little premature at the present time to attempt a detailed review of the rules of origin as provided for in paragraph 5 of Annex A to the Protocol. The Chairman suggested that participating countries might find it helpful for purposes of the review if they were to communicate to the secretariat, say by the end of March, details of any problems concerning certification which they might have experienced in their trading relationships under the Protocol. Such details could then be circulated to members for information.

Reporting procedures for annual review

11. The Chairman recalled that the Decision of November 1971, permitting the introduction of tariff preferences among developing countries, provided for an annual review of the arrangement by the CONTRACTING PARTIES on the basis of a report to be furnished by participating countries. To facilitate consideration of reporting procedures, the first report being due in 1974, the secretariat had made certain suggestions in document CPC/W/6 to which was attached a draft form for the provision of statistical information.

12. One member pointed out that because there were cases where administrative arrangements relating to the implementation of the Protocol had been completed recently it was likely that only limited information on trade at preferential rates of duty would be available during the first year of operation of the Protocol. It was agreed that the Committee would revert again to the subject of reporting procedures at its next regular meeting.

Next meeting

13. It was agreed that the date of the next regular quarterly meeting of the Committee would be fixed by the Chairman after consultation with delegations.