

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

CPC/9

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Special Distribution

Preferential Arrangements Among Developing
Countries Negotiated in GATT

COMMITTEE OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Summary of Discussion at Fifth Meeting
held on 23 July 1974

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Committee of Participating Countries provided for in the Protocol Relating to Trade Negotiations Among Developing Countries held its fifth meeting on 23 July 1974 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Huberto Villar (Spain).

2. The draft agenda for the meeting contained in document CPC/W/8 was adopted.

Special meeting of the Committee of Participating Countries

3. The Chairman drew attention to the summary of the discussion (CPC/S/3) at the second special meeting of the Committee held in June 1974 which had further considered possibilities for expanding the product coverage of the Protocol, improving existing concessions and expanding participation in the arrangement. Some thirty non-participating developing countries had been represented at the special meeting which had been open to all interested developing countries. A number of delegations had indicated an interest in exploring on an informal basis, possibilities for accession to the Protocol in accordance with the procedures outlined in document CPC/S/1, and with the assistance of the secretariat. As mentioned in the note on the meeting (CPC/S/3) participating countries intended to keep under consideration the prospects of initiating a new round of trade negotiations among themselves and with non-participating countries. In this respect, some members had suggested that preparatory work on the identification of possible tariff and non-tariff measures which might be taken up for negotiation in a new round should be initiated at an early date.

4. The Committee agreed that the secretariat should get in touch with delegations having expressed interest in exploring the possibilities for accession to the Protocol with a view to assisting them in identifying products of export interest in the markets of participating countries and to provide information on other relevant

matters of interest to them. The Committee also decided that a communication should be despatched to those countries having taken part in the special meetings, drawing their attention to the procedures for accession contained in document CPC/S/1 and inviting them to make use of those procedures. At the same time, they could be asked to indicate any particular problems they might have in relation to the Protocol so that possible approaches to such questions could be considered. In referring to the scheduling of a further special meeting of the Committee, some members said account would need to be taken of the replies received from non-participants as it was important to move on to a more concrete stage in expanding the opportunities for trade exchanges among developing countries.

Ratification of the Protocol

5. The Chairman said that since the previous meeting of the Committee, Chile had completed ratification procedures, thus bringing to eleven the number of countries having ratified the Protocol. He recalled that at the last special meeting of the Committee the representative of Greece had indicated that his Government had approved ratification and the only action pending in this regard was the publication of the relevant decree in the Government Gazette.

6. The Chairman also recalled that at the last special meeting of the Committee, the representative of Mexico, whose country had been in the process of ratification had stated that, as an interim arrangement, his Government would be prepared to implement its concessions to other participating countries on a reciprocal basis. This suggestion had been subsequently confirmed by correspondence. As a result of more recent developments, however, the representative of Mexico informed the Committee that administrative action had been completed and his Government had authorized the Mexican Ambassador in Geneva - Ambassador Castañeda - to deposit the instrument of ratification by Mexico. Although the Ambassador was at present absent from Geneva, this procedure would be carried out at the earliest possible date. Under the circumstances, he suggested it might be preferable to await formal ratification instead of devising a procedure for the interim implementation of concessions.

7. The Committee, in taking note with appreciation of the information conveyed by the representative of Mexico, agreed that it would be preferable to wait for Mexico's formal ratification of the Protocol.¹ The Committee also agreed that the other signatory countries which have not yet completed ratification procedures² should be invited to do so at the earliest possible date.

¹Mexico's instrument of ratification was deposited on 30 July 1974.

²Greece, Peru, Philippines and Uruguay

Certification of origin

8. The Chairman said that the secretariat had prepared a consolidated document on the rules and certification of origin which would be issued shortly. He recalled that at the last meeting of the Committee, participating countries had been requested to communicate to the secretariat, by the end of May, details of any problems concerning certification which they might have experienced in their trading relationships under the Protocol. No such information had as yet been received. He added that this information was required for the detailed review of the rules of origin provided for in paragraph 5 of Annex A to the Protocol. The Committee decided to inscribe in the agenda of the next meeting the review of any problems which may have arisen in connexion with certification of origin on the basis of comments to be submitted in writing, prior to the meeting, by participating countries.

Reporting procedures for annual review

9. The Chairman recalled that the first report on the operation of the Protocol was scheduled to be submitted to the CONTRACTING PARTIES this year. To facilitate the consideration of reporting procedures by the Committee, the secretariat had made certain suggestions in document CPC/W/6 to which was attached a draft form for the provision of statistical information. He added that, in the normal course, the Council would meet once or perhaps twice before the November session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES. It was therefore necessary, in order to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the report, that participating countries decide on the form of the report, taking into account the objectives and considerations summarized in paragraph 2 of CPC/W/6 and the draft pro-forma for the provision of statistics annexed thereto.

10. The Committee agreed that the report on the operation of the Protocol should have three sections. The first section would contain a factual description of the activities carried out by the Committee of Participating Countries including decisions adopted, as well as relevant information on membership, dates of accession, implementation and administrative procedures by participating countries etc., taking into account the points mentioned in paragraph 2 of CPC/W/6. Section two of the report might contain a short analysis of the statistical information to be provided by participating countries along the lines of the pro-forma annexed to document CPC/W/6; these tabulations would form the third section of the report.

11. The Committee decided to ask the secretariat to prepare a draft of the first section of the report as well as the second section if the statistical data had been provided, for the next meeting of the Committee. In this respect the

Committee agreed that participating countries should be invited by letter to communicate to the secretariat, as soon as possible and no later than mid-September, all relevant information for the preparation of the report.

12. One delegation, in referring to the decision adopted at the April meeting of the Committee that the relevant statistics for inclusion in the report should be provided to the secretariat by mid-September, said his government would supply all pertinent data by the end of August. He hoped that other participating countries would meet the dead-line agreed to.

Next meeting

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