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GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Second Session of the Contracting Parties

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR SESSIONS OF  
THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

(As adopted on 16 August 1948)

CHAPTER I - AGENDA

Rule 1

The provisional agenda for each session shall be drawn up by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairman and shall be communicated to the contracting parties at least three weeks before the date of meeting. It shall be open to any contracting party to propose items for inclusion in this provisional agenda up to one month from the date of meeting.

Rule 2

The first item of business at each session shall be the consideration and approval of an agenda.

Rule 3

The agenda may be amended at any time or priority given to certain items.

CHAPTER II - CREDENTIALS

Rule 4

Each contracting party as defined in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade shall be represented by an accredited representative.

Rule 5

Each representative may be accompanied by such alternate representatives and advisers as he may require.

Rule 6

The credentials of representatives shall be submitted to the Secretary at least one week before the opening of a meeting. They shall take the form of a communication from or on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs authorizing the representative to perform on behalf of the contracting party the functions indicated in Article XXV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The Chairman after consulting with the Secretary shall draw attention to any case where a representative has omitted to present his credentials in due time and form.

### CHAPTER III - OBSERVERS

#### ☒ Rule 7

The representatives of countries signatories of the Final Act adopted at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment at Havana which have not become contracting parties may attend meetings in the capacity of observers participating in the discussions without vote.

#### ☒ Rule 8

Representatives of other governments invited to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment and of inter-governmental organizations may attend the meetings as observers on the invitation of the contracting parties and, on the invitation of the contracting parties, participate without vote in accordance with the terms of such invitation.

### CHAPTER IV - OFFICERS

#### Rule 9

A Chairman and a Vice-Chairman shall be elected from among the representatives. They shall each hold office for a period of one year. Should this period expire in the interval between meetings of the contracting parties, the officers concerned shall hold office until the next meeting.

#### Rule 10

If the Chairman is absent from any meeting or part thereof, the Vice-Chairman shall preside. If the Vice-Chairman is not available, the contracting parties shall elect a chairman for that meeting or that part of the meeting.

#### Rule 11

If the Chairman ceases to represent a contracting party or is so incapacitated that he can no longer hold office, the Vice-Chairman shall become Chairman.

#### Rule 12

The Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairman.

#### Rule 13

The Chairman or the Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman shall normally participate in the proceedings as such and not as the representative of a contracting party. He may, however, at any time request that he be permitted to act in either capacity.

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☒ Adopted provisionally.

⌘ Rule 14

Pending the final determination of matters relating to the Secretariat and expenses, the Executive Secretary of the Interim Commission for the International Trade Organization shall, by agreement with the Commission, perform the usual duties of a Secretariat.

CHAPTER V - CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Rule 15

A simple majority of the contracting parties shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 16

In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him elsewhere by these rules, the Chairman shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting, shall direct the discussion, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote, announce decisions, rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, have complete control of the proceedings. The Chairman may also call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant.

Rule 17

During the discussion of any matter a representative may raise a point of order. In this case the Chairman shall immediately state his ruling. If his ruling is challenged, the Chairman shall immediately submit it for decision and it shall stand unless overruled.

Rule 18

During the discussion of any matter a representative may move the adjournment of the debate. Any such motion shall have priority. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one representative may be allowed to speak in favour of, and two representatives against, the motion.

Rule 19

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate. In addition to the mover of the motion, not more than one representative may be granted permission to speak in favour of the motion and not more than two representatives may be granted permission to speak against the motion, after which the motion shall be put to the vote immediately.

Rule 20

During the course of a debate the Chairman may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the meeting, declare the list closed. He may, however, accord

a right of reply to any representative if a speech delivered after he has declared the list closed makes this desirable.

Rule 21

The Chairman, with the consent of the contracting parties, may limit the time allowed to each speaker.

Rule 22

Proposals and amendments shall normally be introduced in writing and circulated to all representatives not later than twelve hours before the commencement of the meeting at which they are to be discussed.

Rule 23

If two or more proposals are moved relating to the same question, the meeting shall first vote on the most far-reaching proposal and then on the next most far-reaching proposal and so on.

Rule 24

When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be put to the vote first, and if it is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be put to the vote.

Rule 25

When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the meeting shall vote first on the amendments farthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then, if necessary, on the amendment next farthest removed, and so on until all the amendments have been put to the vote.

Rule 26

Parts of a proposal may be voted on separately if a representative requests that the proposal be divided.

CHAPTER VI - VOTING

Rule 27

Except as otherwise specified in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, decisions shall be taken by a majority of the representatives present and voting.

Rule 28

Each contracting party shall be entitled to one vote.

CHAPTER VII - COMMITTEES

Rule 29

Such committees and sub-committees as may be necessary may be established.

Rule 30

A simple majority of the members of a committee shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 31

The provisions of Rules 15 to 28 shall be applied in the proceedings of committees.

CHAPTER VIII - LANGUAGES

Rule 32

Subject to the provisions of Rule 33, English and French shall be the working languages.

Rule 33

A decision, by unanimous agreement, may be taken at any meeting to adopt a rule of procedure regarding interpretations of a more simple character than Rule 32.

CHAPTER IX - RECORDS

Rule 34

Summary records of the meetings of the contracting parties shall be kept by the Secretariat. They shall be sent as soon as possible to all representatives who shall inform the Secretariat not later than twenty-four hours after the circulation of the summary record of any changes they wish to have made.

Rule 35

Committees may decide to adopt records of a more simple form than those mentioned in Rule 34.

CHAPTER X - PUBLICITY OF MEETINGS

Rule 36

The meetings of the contracting parties and of committees shall ordinarily be held in private. It may be decided that a particular meeting or meetings should be held in public.

Rule 37

After a private meeting has been held, the Chairman of the body concerned may issue a communique to the press.

CHAPTER XI - REVISION

Rule 38

The contracting parties may decide at any time to revise these rules or any part of them.

