

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

LDC/M/76

6 December 1968

Special Distribution

MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HELD ON 20, 22 AND 23 NOVEMBER 1968

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The informal group of developing countries in GATT met on 20 November 1968, under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. H.C. Archibald, Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago, to discuss matters being dealt with at the current session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Israel, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Yugoslavia. Colombia was represented by an observer.
2. Members of the group commented on the summing up by the Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES of discussions at the plenary meeting on the subjects of expansion of trade and residual import restrictions (cf. W.25/6 and 7). Some members considered that these statements of the Chairman did not adequately reflect the views and suggestions put forward by developing countries. They requested the Chairman of the group to bring this to the attention of the Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES with a view to ensuring that the substantive points made by developing countries were appropriately reflected in the conclusions of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.
3. The group discussed the existing procedures and practices in various organs of GATT and considered various suggestions on ways and means of improving them with a view to ensuring that problems of concern to developing countries were accorded high priority in their deliberations and endeavours. It was suggested that the institutional rôle of the Committee on Trade and Development should be strengthened so that it would become the focal point for review of and action on problems of developing countries. One developing country suggested that the trade problems of developing countries being dealt with in the Special Group on Tropical Products, the Agriculture Committee and the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products should be transferred from these bodies to the Committee on Trade and Development. The latter might set up consultative groups to examine and initiate action for the reduction and elimination of trade barriers on products of export interest to developing countries on a more urgent basis. The trade barriers affecting processed and semi-processed tropical products, for example, having all been clearly identified and thoroughly examined in various international bodies, there was no reason why negotiations for their elimination could not be initiated immediately for their results to be implemented before the twenty-sixth session. On completion of appropriate studies, similar action could be taken with respect to other agricultural products and industrial products of interest to developing countries.
4. Some members of the group felt that it might not be in the interest of developing countries for all trade problems of developing countries to be referred to the Committee on Trade and Development. Problems affecting products such as bovine meat,

which were of interest to both developed and developing countries, might not lend themselves to useful discussion in that Committee. A more effective solution would seem to be to empower the Committee to oversee the discussions in the existing bodies which had special competence in these fields.

5. It was suggested that developing countries should support the proposal that a special working party be established to probe into the deficiencies in the actual implementation of Part IV and any inadequacies in those provisions. In general the developing countries should seek to ensure a greater participation in all decision-making processes in GATT.

6. In relation to the trade negotiations among developing countries it was proposed that the CONTRACTING PARTIES should be asked to undertake to study international support measures within the framework of GATT so that the results of negotiations among developing countries prove beneficial to all concerned.

7. Members of the group generally supported the New Zealand proposal on residual restrictions. They expressed the view that if any restrictions were to be maintained, they should be covered by appropriate waivers and that the waivers should include a programme for progressive elimination of import restrictions and wherever possible target dates for such action.

8. After a discussion it was agreed that developing countries should, in the light of the views expressed, prepare a paper setting out their joint position concerning guidelines for the work of GATT between now and the twenty-sixth session. The group requested the representatives of India, Nigeria, Uruguay and Yugoslavia to draw up a proposed programme of action for consideration by the group.

9. The informal group reconvened on 22 and 23 November and unanimously approved the "Proposed Conclusions" drafted by the four delegations (Spec(68)127).

10. The group nominated the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, India, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago and Yugoslavia to represent, in the light of the "Proposed Conclusions", the interests of developing countries in the Drafting Group on Conclusions to be established by the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

11. Members of the group noted the views expressed with regard to the election of officers for the year 1969.