

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HELD ON 31 MARCH 1969

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. A meeting of the Informal Group of Developing Countries in GATT was held on 31 March 1969 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. C.H. Archibald, Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago. The meeting was attended by representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Chile, Ghana, India, Israel, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia.
2. The Chairman explained that the meeting had been convened mainly to consider the situation regarding the submission of statements on difficulties encountered by contracting parties in the implementation of Part IV (COM.TD/65, page 2). It appeared that it had not proved possible for the majority of developing countries to meet the deadline of 31 March. In the meantime, as agreed at the last meeting of the Informal Group, he had in collaboration with a number of members circulated to the Group an "indicative outline", which delegations might find useful in assisting their governments in the preparation of their statements. The paper attempted to enumerate the types of issues that might be covered but was not intended to define the scope or content of such statements.
3. Members of the Group expressed appreciation to the Chairman and his collaborators for the paper. They felt that its contents would prove most valuable to their respective authorities and that it would be useful if members would transmit the paper to their capitals. They also felt that given the importance of the subject more time was required for the preparation of the statements.
4. Some members considered that an effort should be made in future to go beyond the information and confrontation exercises which had hitherto been carried out by the Committee on Trade and Development in reviewing the operation of Part IV. Developing countries should, as suggested in paragraph 7 of the Conclusions of the twenty-fifth session, initiate consultations under Article XXXVII:2 with a view to seeking concrete solutions to problems affecting specific products of interest to them. In preparing their statements on the operation of Part IV they should not limit themselves to airing general complaints or dissatisfaction but should rather point to specific cases of their experience of the non-application of Part IV, bearing in mind that as a mechanism GATT was most effective in dealing with specific problems. Some members felt that developing countries had perhaps up to now not made full use of such possibilities as were offered by Part IV and that they should take full advantage of the present opportunity to

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exchange views on the circumstances which had inhibited their ready recourse to its provisions. It was also suggested that parallel with the work being carried out on this problem a similarly active interest should be displayed by developing countries in other relevant GATT activities.

5. One member felt that it would be useful if a standing sub-Group were established to deal with those specific instances of difficulties in the application of Part IV as they arose. In reply to a question as to the desirability of establishing a special sub-Group along these lines, Mr. M.G. Mathur, Assistant Director-General, recalled that the principal functions of the Committee on Trade and Development were to supervise the implementation of the provisions of Part IV and to carry out any consultations on specific difficulties which might be requested under its provisions. It would therefore appear that a suitable mechanism already existed for the carrying out of any overall appreciation of accumulated experience as well as for dealing with any specific cases of non-implementation. Commenting on the time-limit for the submission of statements, he pointed out that the date for the next meeting of the Committee on Trade and Development would be contingent on the receipt of such statements and expressed the hope that the submissions would be available in time for the meeting to be held at the originally envisaged date.

6. Summing up, the Chairman noted that there seemed to be general recognition among developing countries that it was incumbent on them to state the problems which had been encountered in the implementation of Part IV, and that they should refer to specific examples of their experience. Developing countries should regard this examination of the operation of Part IV as an important opportunity for them to clarify and define their position and to lay the foundation for further steps towards realization of the fundamental objectives of Part IV. Members of the Group had generally indicated an intention to transmit the "indicative outline" referred to in paragraph 2 above to their governments for reference. It was agreed, while a little delay might be inevitable in some cases, every effort should be made by governments and delegations to send in the required statements at as early a date as possible.