

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

CPC/48

11 January 1979

Special Distribution

Preferential Arrangements
Among Developing Countries
Negotiated in GATT

COMMITTEE OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Summary of Discussion at Twenty-Second Meeting
Held on 11 December 1978

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Committee of Participating Countries provided for in the Protocol Relating to Trade Negotiations Among Developing Countries held its twenty-second meeting on 11 December 1978 under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. Liontas (Greece).
2. The draft agenda for the meeting circulated in document CPC/W/65 was adopted.

Five-year review by the CONTRACTING PARTIES of the Decision concerning the Protocol
Relating to Trade Negotiations Among Developing Countries

3. The Chairman recalled that the Report for the Five-Year Review by the CONTRACTING PARTIES of the Decision concerning the Protocol Relating to Trade Negotiations Among Developing Countries had been adopted at an ad hoc meeting of the Committee held on 30 October 1978 and issued as document L/4710 and Addenda. This report had been subsequently taken up at the November meeting of the Committee on Trade and Development and at the thirty-fourth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.
4. The Committee took note that in the course of the thirty-fourth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, a number of delegations in commenting on the report had referred to the question of the enlargement in scope and coverage as well as membership of the Protocol. In reiterating views reflected in the report of the Consultative Group of Eighteen to the Council (L/4715), some delegations had stressed the importance attached to an early start of a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries. Consequently, in his concluding remarks the Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES had noted that the hope had been expressed by a number of developing country delegations that an early decision would be taken on the holding of a further round of trade negotiations among developing countries in the context of the Protocol and it had been proposed in this connexion that, as a matter of some urgency, a concrete work programme be established.

Enlargement of the Protocol

5. The Chairman drew attention to a progress report by the secretariat (Spec(78)26 and Add.1) on its work in relation to the collection of basic data which was being undertaken to enable interested delegations assess the prospects for a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries. Spec(78)26 basically reviewed trends in the composition, direction and structure of developing country trade in recent years and identified, in the light of the technical work carried out so far, a number of tariff and trade measures which could be considered for inclusion in a further round of trade negotiations among developing countries. It was expected that this listing could be expanded further as the technical work proceeded. Paragraph 23 of the secretariat note contained some concluding observations on the work carried out so far. Spec(78)26/Add.1 provided, for illustrative purposes, a provisional list of items of significant export interest to a number of developing countries in either 1976 or 1977.

6. Several members of the Committee reiterated their objective of seeking to enlarge both the product coverage and scope as well as membership of the arrangement through a new round of trade negotiations open to all developing countries in the framework of the Protocol. It was recalled that members had generally expressed a wish to initiate a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries once the multilateral trade negotiations had been concluded. In commending the substantial technical background information prepared by the secretariat in connexion with the enlargement of the Protocol, support was expressed for some of the preliminary concluding observations concerning the development of trade exchanges among developing countries contained in paragraph 23 of document Spec(78)26. Some members stressed the desirability of adopting an early decision to commence a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries and drawing-up guidelines for the negotiations. Such action which would facilitate the establishment of the required machinery in capitals, might be preceded by a meeting of members of the Committee and other interested developing countries early in 1979.

7. In his concluding remarks, the Chairman said that in the light of the discussions at this and earlier meetings of the Committee, he was in a position to list the following points concerning enlargement of the Protocol:

- (i) the technical background information prepared by the secretariat up to the present, appeared to provide a body of information which, when completed, should enable countries participating in the work programme to have an overall view of the possibilities and prospects for a new round of trade negotiations among interested developing countries;

(ii) an informal meeting of interested countries participating in the current work programme would be convened by the secretariat as early as possible in the new year on a date to be fixed in consultation with delegations so as to provide an opportunity for an exchange of views on the technical work generally and on how this work might best proceed;

(iii) the secretariat was invited to complete its technical work as soon as practicable, having regard to the suggestions made by delegations at the proposed meeting. On the basis of the information collected as well as comments and proposals put forward by interested developing countries, and other relevant developments, the secretariat would be expected to present its overall appreciation of the scope for a further round of trade negotiations among developing countries in terms of the Protocol and the steps that need to be taken for a decision to this end;

(iv) subject to the availability of this material, a meeting of all interested developing countries would be convened on a date to be agreed in 1979 with a view to examining possibilities and procedures for expanding trade among developing countries on a multilateral basis through a further round of negotiations.

Accession of Romania

8. The Chairman stated that following the deposit of the instrument of ratification, the Protocol of Accession of Romania had entered into force on 15 September 1978. As provided in paragraph 1(vi) of the Protocol, the delegation of Romania had supplied the information required on rules and certification of origin which has been circulated in document CPC/10/Add.11. It was expected that this information would enable participating countries to take the necessary action to pursue opportunities for expanding their trade exchanges with Romania on items covered by the Protocol.

9. The Committee noted that procedures relating to the accession of Romania to the Protocol had now been finalized and that a useful basis existed for the further expansion of trade between Romania and other participating countries.

Rotation of officers

10. The Chairman said that in accordance with paragraph 1 of the rules of procedure of the Committee (CPC/47), his term of office had come to an end. He thanked members for their assistance and valuable co-operation in carrying out the activities of the Committee in particular with respect to possibilities

for enlargement of the Protocol. In accordance with the rules of procedure, the representative of India would assume the Chairmanship of the Committee for the forthcoming period, with the representative of Mexico becoming the Vice-Chairman.

Next meeting

11. The Chairman said that in accordance with usual procedures, the date of the next regular quarterly meeting of the Committee would be fixed by the Chairman in consultation with members of the Committee and the secretariat.