

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

CPC/67
25 March 1983

Special Distribution

Preferential Arrangements
Among Developing Countries
Negotiated in GATT

COMMITTEE OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Summary of Discussions at Thirty-Fourth Meeting
held on 16 March 1983

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Committee of Participating Countries provided for in the Protocol Relating to Trade Negotiations Among Developing Countries held its thirty-fourth meeting on 16 March 1982 under the Chairmanship of Mr. O. Özüye (Turkey).

2. The draft agenda circulated in documents CPC/W/96 and Addendum 1 was adopted.

Extension of the Protocol of Accession of Bangladesh

3. The Chairman referred to documents CPC/66 and CPC/W/96/Addendum 1, which indicate that the period of validity of the Protocol of Accession of Bangladesh expires on 28 March 1983. Document CPC/66 is a communication from the representative of Bangladesh requesting an extension of the duration of the Protocol for a further period of three years. The same document also includes an Annex containing a draft decision drawn up by the secretariat which extends the duration of the Protocol of Accession of Bangladesh until 28 March 1986. The representative of Bangladesh reiterated the interest of his authorities in the Protocol Relating to Trade Negotiations Among Developing Countries and expressed the hope that the Committee would agree to an extension of his country's Protocol of Accession. The Committee so agreed and adopted the decision as drafted in the Annex to document CPC/66.

Accession of Argentina

4. The Chairman referred to discussions at the last session of the Committee (CPC/63, paras. 3-5) concerning Argentina's application for accession to the Protocol and invited delegations to comment on this matter. The representative of Argentina stated that he had nothing new to report since the last meeting of the Committee. His authorities were still in the process of preparing a new list of offers and any progress in this regard would be communicated promptly to the Committee. The Committee took note of this information and urged interested participating countries to make every effort to bring the negotiations to a mutually satisfactory conclusion at an early date.

Expansion of trade among developing countries

5. The Chairman recalled the decision of the Committee (CPC/63, paras. 6-7) to carry out a review of the schedules of concessions of participating countries with a view to facilitating action aimed at updating and improving the scope and coverage of the concessions on the basis of the considerations and principles embodied in the Preamble to the Protocol.

6. The Chairman noted that in the light of factual material prepared by the secretariat and informal discussions among participating countries, it had been agreed that countries intending to forward requests in connexion with the review exercise would inform the secretariat of this intention before 16 March. Six delegations had already indicated that they were ready to submit request lists or proposals, and several others stated the intention of their authorities to prepare request lists and engage fully in the review exercise. Some other representatives of participating countries informed the Committee that although their authorities had no immediate intention to prepare and exchange request lists, they generally supported the review exercise. A number of these delegations also said that any requests of other participating countries addressed to their authorities would be given consideration. The Committee agreed that there was sufficient interest and support among participating countries for the review exercise to begin immediately.

7. On the basis of a secretariat proposal, the Committee agreed that procedures for the review exercise would consist of two distinct stages. The first stage would involve informal bilateral and plurilateral consultations between interested participating countries during which information and clarifications concerning the review exercise would be exchanged. The second stage would involve the circulation of formal requests and subsequent negotiations. The exchange of additional concessions could cover tariffs as well as any non-tariff measures. The Committee would monitor and supervise the conduct of the work, and periodically review progress made and take up any question which might arise. The secretariat would stand ready to make arrangements relating to meetings and documentation as required. The secretariat would also provide upon request any technical assistance required in relation to the review exercise. There was some discussion in the Committee about whether a calendar should be established for this exercise and the Committee decided that it would review progress made at its next session and might take up the question of establishing a calendar again at that time. The Committee agreed that the secretariat would prepare a note summarising these arrangements.

Participation in CPC meetings

8. The Chairman recalled that at its last meeting the Committee took note of the suggestion that non-member developing countries might be invited to follow the activities of the Committee in an observer capacity and decided to revert to this question at a later meeting (CPC/63, para. 11). After an exchange of views the Committee agreed that this question would be reverted to at the last Committee meeting prior to the submission of the annual report on the Protocol to the CONTRACTING PARTIES. In the meantime, the possibility would continue to remain open to any developing country to apply for observer status in the Committee.

Rotation of Officers

9. The Chairman noted that his term of office had come to an end, and in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure, invited the representative of Uruguay (Mr. A. Moerzinger) to assume the Chairmanship of the Committee and the representative of Yugoslavia (Mr. S. Mrksa), the Vice-Chairmanship, for the forthcoming period.

Next Meeting

10. The Chairman indicated that in accordance with normal practice, the date for the next meeting of the Committee would be fixed in consultation with delegations and the secretariat.