

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

C/4

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Limited Distribution

COUNCIL

22 February - 3 March 1961

## FUTURE WORK OF THE COUNCIL

### Proposals by the Executive Secretary

It has been suggested in the advance agenda for the Council meeting on 22 February (C/3) that it would be useful if the Council were to consider some planning of its work for subsequent meetings during 1961. The only other meeting of the Council thus far envisaged for 1961 is to be held from 25 September to 3 October, but the Council will be convened at other times if required.

#### 1. Procedures for new and residual balance-of-payments restrictions

The question of the scope of notifications to be submitted pursuant to paragraph 7 of the procedures, approved at the seventeenth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES (L/1394), has been included in the agenda for the February meeting, but the Council was also instructed (SR.17/8) to review the procedures themselves and to submit a report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES at the nineteenth session. It is suggested that this review should be undertaken at the September meeting in the light of experience of the application of the procedures during the year.

#### 2. Impact of commodity problems upon international trade

A number of suggestions were made at the seventeenth session (SR.17/6) concerning the procedure for dealing with this item in future years. It was agreed that the Council should make arrangements for the consideration of this item by the CONTRACTING PARTIES in 1961. It is suggested that the Council at its meeting in September should discuss this question and endeavour to identify the particular problems, if any, to which the CONTRACTING PARTIES should give attention; the Council might also make arrangements for the consideration of any such problems, preferably before the nineteenth session begins.

#### 3. Disposal of commodity surpluses

On this question also, a number of suggestions were made at the seventeenth session concerning the manner in which the item should be treated by the CONTRACTING PARTIES in future years (SR.17/6). The United States representative suggested that contracting parties which dispose of commodity surpluses in world markets should submit annual written reports and that these should be examined by the

Council which would decide whether the item should be included in the agenda of the CONTRACTING PARTIES. It is suggested that the Council should give a trial to the proposed procedure by inviting contracting parties which have disposed of surpluses since the seventeenth session to submit reports by 1 September, so that at its meeting in September the Council could decide which questions, if any, should be included in the agenda for the nineteenth session. The Council might also consider whether this item should be broadened to cover the liquidation of strategic stocks as well as the disposal of commodity surpluses; (the two Resolutions adopted by the CONTRACTING PARTIES on 4 March 1955 are reproduced on pages 50/51 of the Third Supplement).

#### 4. Reports under waivers

It was suggested at the sixteenth session, by the Special Group on Organization (L/1200), that reports on action taken under waivers should be examined by the Council in order to expedite the work of sessions of the CONTRACTING PARTIES. The following suggestions are put forward for consideration by the Council:

##### (i) Agricultural waivers

It is suggested that the Council should consult with the representatives of the United States and Belgium with a view to the annual reports, under the Decisions of 5 March 1955 and 3 December 1955, being submitted in time for them to be considered by the Council at the September meeting. If this should not be practicable, the reports might be submitted to the Council after the nineteenth session; the Council could examine them and report thereon to the twentieth session.

##### (ii) The Saar waiver and the United Kingdom waivers

It might be agreed that these reports should be submitted in time for them to be examined by the Council at the meeting in September.

##### (iii) Italy/Libya waiver

This waiver comes up for review in 1961. There would seem to be no reason why this review should not be carried out by the Council at its meeting in September.

#### 5. Consultations with Yugoslavia and Poland

The Council might consider submitting to the CONTRACTING PARTIES a recommendation that the annual consultations with Yugoslavia and Poland, under the Declarations of 25 May 1959 and 9 November 1959, should be conducted by the Council. It is suggested that the second consultation with Yugoslavia should be carried out at the September meeting and the first consultation with Poland at a meeting early in 1962.

6. Sessions of the CONTRACTING PARTIES

(a) It is suggested that in future the Council should draw up in advance of each session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES a time-table for the first week, in order that delegates will know which items will be taken up and will be able to make the necessary preparations so that there will not be a serious loss of time during the first week as in the past. For the eighteenth session this might be done by the Council at the February meeting and for the nineteenth session at the meeting in September.

(b) At the September meeting, the Council might consider the probable work programme for 1962 with a view to submitting a recommendation to the CONTRACTING PARTIES as to the number of sessions that should be held during 1962.

7. Finance and administration

Detailed examination of budget estimates and of other financial and administrative questions during sessions of the CONTRACTING PARTIES is proving increasingly difficult both for contracting parties and the secretariat. Therefore, in future these matters might be dealt with, in the first instance, by the Council. For this purpose the Council might establish an advisory committee on finance and administration which would report to the Council in advance of the autumn session at which time the Council would finalize the budget except for formal approval by the CONTRACTING PARTIES after any modification that might be necessitated by decisions taken during the session.

The question of further provision for the use of the Spanish language has been referred to the Council.