

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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COUNCIL
4 July 1963

MINUTES OF MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on
4 July 1963

Chairman: Mr. S.Chr. SOMMERFELT (Norway)

- Subjects discussed:
1. Establishment of the Action Committee
 2. Programme of Meetings - September to December 1963

1. Establishment of the Action Committee (C/W/56, Spec(63)183, Spec(63)185 and C/W/64)

The establishment of an Action Committee, in accordance with the directives received from the meeting of Ministers in May, was considered at the last meeting of the Council, but it was agreed to hold a further meeting to take a decision on the composition of the Committee. Three proposals were before the Council:

- (a) a suggestion by the Chairman (C/W/56) that the Action Committee should be a small group of about eleven members, to be chosen by process of election;
- (b) a suggestion by the representative of Nigeria (Spec(63)183) that the Committee should have about fourteen members, selected on a regional basis;
- (c) a proposal by the representative of India, the United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia (C/W/64) that the Action Committee should be a larger body, composed of all those contracting parties wishing to be members.

After discussion the Council agreed that the Action Committee should be established in the following manner:

- (i) Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the Committee will be those established in the Resolution adopted by Ministers (MIN(63)8).

(ii) Relations to other bodies

Continuity in the work of Committee III, which has a broad, all-embracing programme, will be maintained. The work of the Action Committee will not impinge directly on this programme, but it will act as a sort of catalyst and support for the work of Committee III, particularly whenever major difficulties arise which require close and urgent attention and the solution of which is a condition for moving forward with the work of Committee III. The CONTRACTING PARTIES will continue to look to Committee III to develop the longer-range and continuing programmes including the elaboration of new ideas. Although the Action Committee may take cognizance of reports by Committee III before they are submitted to the CONTRACTING PARTIES, it would take action on new recommendations by Committee III only after their approval by the CONTRACTING PARTIES. The Chairman, for the time being, of Committee III will be an ex officio member of the Action Committee. Further, in one way or another, the Executive Secretary's Special Adviser on Development will be closely associated with the work of the Action Committee.

The Action Committee will not exercise any direct supervision or control over the Working Group on Preferences or the Committee on the Legal and Institutional Framework of the GATT in Relation to Less-Developed Countries, but it will follow very closely the work of these two bodies and will be prepared to intervene and assist if they should run into serious difficulties. While these two bodies will report directly to the CONTRACTING PARTIES it will be appropriate for the Action Committee to take cognizance of their reports before they are considered by the CONTRACTING PARTIES and if it is thought useful the Committee will make suggestions, comments or recommendations which the CONTRACTING PARTIES may consider when they take up the reports.

In view of the very great importance of the work of the Committee its meetings will be programmed well in advance so that contracting parties which are not members can send observers to present their views.

(iii) Working methods

In order to minimize the burden of representation, the Committee's meetings will normally be held during the same periods as meetings of the Council, although the two bodies will not meet at the same time. The Committee will appoint its own officers and, if necessary, a small executive group to act in accordance with the Committee's instructions during periods between meetings of the Committee. Such an executive group would hold short and frequent meetings and would report to the Committee after each meeting. The Committee itself will issue a brief report after each of its meetings and will submit a full and comprehensive report each year to the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

(iv) Membership

The Committee will be composed of the contracting parties and the governments participating in the work of the CONTRACTING PARTIES which indicate their desire to serve. In order to establish the composition, the Executive Secretary

will conduct an enquiry in two stages. In the first instance, he will enquire which governments wish to be members regardless of the size of the Committee and inviting provisional requests from those which will desire membership only in the event of a large Committee being established. This will be followed by a second enquiry to enable the governments having made provisional requests to decide, having regard to the number of firm requests received, whether they wish to maintain their requests for membership.

2. Programme of Meetings - September to December 1963 (C/W/65)

In document C/W/65 there was circulated a programme of meetings for the autumn of 1963, as agreed by the Council at its last meeting along with other meetings decided upon by the Trade Negotiations Committee. A member of Council requested reconsideration of the recommendation to postpone the twenty-first session until 1964.

The Council agreed that the twenty-first session should take place from 18-22 November in order to review the preparations for the 1964 Trade Negotiations and to deal with routine items or any other matters which would not prolong the meetings beyond that date. The Executive Secretary said that it would be his intention to submit a progress report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES concerning the current programme of GATT activities. The Council felt that the twenty-first session should probably be resumed in the early part of 1964, the final decision to be taken by the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

A meeting of the Council will be held on 13-15 November.

