

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF THREE

At the twenty-third session of the Committee on 21 February 1973, the following statement was made by Ambassador B.R. Patel (India).

I should like to begin by recalling that the Committee on Trade and Development considered at its last session held in October 1972 the second report of the Group of Three. The Committee endorsed the recommendations made by the Group of Three with respect to a number of matters such as the re-orientation of the work of the Group on Residual Restrictions and the provision of appropriate technical assistance to developing countries in connexion with their participation in the trade negotiations. Representatives of developing countries also stressed the importance they attached to certain points in this report relating to further action on tropical and processed agricultural products and the provision of easier access for exports of specialty items from developing countries including technical assistance in this regard. Several representatives considered that the Group could perform a useful advisory rôle in relation to the trade interests of developing countries in the negotiations.

When the CONTRACTING PARTIES met at their twenty-eighth session in November last year, they agreed that the Group should continue to seek ways of ensuring the implementation of recommendations already made and follow up any matters brought to its attention by any developing country with a view to seeking a solution. It was also noted that some delegations had considered that the Group of Three could play a useful rôle in the context of the trade negotiations.

The Committee on Trade and Development will, no doubt, wish to keep under review action taken to implement recommendations made in the Group's last report and to see how best it could follow up the exchange of views that has already taken place.

For its part, the Group intends, over the coming months, to hold a series of consultations with delegations of both developed and developing countries, with a view to reporting to the Committee on the progress made by it in fulfilling its mandate, not later than the end of June 1973. These consultations will inevitably take account of the new possibilities for action with respect to the trade problems of developing countries that are opened up by the prospective multilateral trade negotiations. Thus in its consultations with the delegations of developed countries, the Group would wish to discuss ways and means of overcoming problems affecting implementation of recommendations contained in past reports and will seek to make suggestions for any follow-up action that might be possible within the framework of the multilateral trade

negotiations or in other ways. Similarly, in its consultations with the developing countries, the Group would be endeavouring to acquaint itself in greater detail with the specific trade problems which these countries would wish to be taken into account in the context of the multilateral trade negotiations, including trade barriers which might not so far have been dealt with in the course of the preparatory work. I might add that it is the Group's intention to consult on matters relating to their trade interest in the negotiations also with those non-GATT developing countries participating in the preparatory work for the negotiations who consider that such consultations would be useful.

The Group intends to hold its consultations with developing countries in the period 12-16 March 1973 (continuing in the following week if necessary) and with delegations of developed countries from 2-9 May.

The Group thus expects to have before it a very busy schedule. However, the work of the Group has always benefited enormously from the very active co-operation and goodwill that it has received from all delegations with whom it has consulted in the past. I have no doubt that this co-operation will be forthcoming in the same generous measure this year also both from delegations of developed countries with whom it has consulted over the past two years and those of developing countries with whom it will be consulting for the first time. The Group thus approaches its task with the earnest desire and hope not only of pursuing further the possibilities for follow-up action by developed countries in respect of those trade problems of developing countries which have already been dealt with in earlier reports but also of making some constructive suggestions in regard to the development of working procedures and approaches designed to facilitate the more effective participation of developing countries in the negotiations. The Group would welcome suggestions from members of the Committee on its work programme.