

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BY THE SECRETARIAT TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

### Note by the Secretariat

1. Technical assistance to developing countries to facilitate their effective participation in the multilateral trade negotiations has been provided by the GATT secretariat since March 1972 following discussions in the GATT Council of the notifications of intent to initiate such negotiations made by several contracting parties. This assistance has been provided in accordance with recommendations made by the principal GATT Committees involved in the preparatory work for the trade negotiations and by the Group of Three on the kind of assistance that might be found useful and on the basis of specific requests by developing countries whether or not contracting parties to the GATT.

#### I. Analytical material or studies produced for the use of individual delegations or groups of delegations

2. As recommended by the Group of Three and by the Committee on Trade and Development the secretariat has carried out a large number of "country studies" for the purpose of providing individual developing countries at their request, with data that would give them a better understanding of their interests in the negotiations.
3. A total of thirty-two country studies so requested have been completed and made available to the respective delegations. Eleven of them relate to non-GATT countries.
4. These studies consist of computer print-out data covering about 150-160 four-digit BTN headings at the tariff line level in respect of each of fourteen developed importing countries included in the Tariff Study files. They include data for 1970 on imports from all sources, from the developing countries from the country for which the study is prepared, also showing their respective percentage shares in the total imports of each developed country, the tariff rates (including, for specific or mixed rates, ad valorem incidences), an indication of levies and other charges, if any, whether the tariff position is bound in GATT and an indication of GSP coverage and type of GSP preference, where applicable. In addition, there are annotations indicating quantitative restrictions or other non-tariff barriers that may have been notified to the GATT.

5. The material covers items that are of current or potential export interest to the countries concerned. The listings for the computer print-out programme were established by the secretariat in consultation with the delegations.
6. At the request of delegations, a number of these studies have been extended to cover additional products in respect of which these countries have desired further information.
7. In addition to comprehensive country studies, data in relation to selected products or groups of products have also been provided to several developing countries. These data usually deal with the particular tariff and non-tariff problems affecting the items concerned in different export markets with particular reference to the treatment accorded to imports at different stages of processing.
8. Requests by countries or groups of countries are now also increasingly taking the form of more selective demands for assistance in identifying the products, product-sectors or barriers and measures of priority interest to them, and in respect of which they might usefully engage in the negotiations. The secretariat has already dealt with such requests from about fifteen countries. This assistance involves, *inter alia*, an analysis of the tariff and non-tariff barriers situation in individual sectors for products at different stages of processing and of the cross-links between different sectors organized in such a way as to provide a co-ordinated picture of the relevance of trade policy measures to export possibilities.
9. The analytical work referred to at paragraph 8 and above also takes into account any appropriate data on production, prices and trade as well as information on export possibilities and marketing conditions.
10. Assistance in respect of the identification of tariff bindings, the trade interest of individual countries in items under negotiation and related matters in connexion with consultations and renegotiations under Article XXIV:6, was provided by the secretariat to a number of developing countries which had requested such assistance.

II. Examination of the interests of developing countries in various negotiating techniques or approaches in the industrial and agricultural fields and analysis of the implications of suggested possible solutions particularly with respect to non-tariff barriers

11. A preliminary analysis of the implications for developing countries of the adoption of alternative negotiating techniques and modalities which were under discussion in the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products and the Agriculture Committee was made in documents COM.IND/W/85 and COM.AG/W/86, of July and September 1972, respectively.

12. In pursuance of a decision taken in the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products, the secretariat also carried out a study on the relationship of the Generalized System of Preferences and most-favoured-nation tariff reductions (COM.IND/W/111). The Committee subsequently agreed that the secretariat should be asked to produce detailed tabulations for use of developing countries which would enable them to examine in thirty product categories or sectors the flows of trade at most-favoured-nation and preferential rates as well as the non-tariff barriers applying to products in each of these sectors and thus facilitate, at the appropriate time, an assessment of the implications of multilateral tariff reductions for the benefits derived by them from the GSP on the basis of an appreciation of the magnitudes of trade involved. These tabulations are in preparation.

13. With a view to facilitating the task of the developing countries in pursuing action in the field of tariffs, the Tariff Study prepared by the secretariat contains tabulations identifying industrial sectors in which developing countries account for more than 20 per cent of the trade and listing tariff items of particular interest to these countries which attract specially high rates of duty.

14. In pursuance of a decision taken in the Committee on Trade and Development, the secretariat has also carried out a study of the implications for developing countries of certain non-tariff measures dealt with in the Groups established by the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products and the Agriculture Committee and of possible solutions that have been under consideration with respect to these measures. Among the studies that have already been circulated are those on health and sanitary regulations (COM.TD/W/190), standards (COM.TD/W/191) and customs valuation (COM.TD/W/195).

15. With a view to assisting developing countries in assessing the relevance for their export trade of different techniques and modalities under examination in the GATT with reference to agricultural products exported by both developing and developed countries, information for an initial seventeen temperate-zone agricultural products was circulated in document INT(72)125, of December 1972. The information covers trade flows and types of import measures applied (tariffs, GSP, levies, quantitative restrictions and other non-tariff barriers), together with an indication of the share of the developing countries concerned in total imports of the product into the developed countries.

16. Some of the information provided in documentation listed under this section should also serve to enable developing countries to identify their common interest as exporters of particular items and to consider what may be done in the negotiations on different products and barriers to have this joint interest taken into account.

III. Data on trade flows and trade barriers prepared in the context of discussions of problems of particular interest to developing countries in the Committee on Trade and Development and other GATT bodies

17. A number of documents prepared for the purpose of discussion in the Committee on Trade and Development contain data or analytical material that is intended for use of the relevant negotiating bodies and of the developing countries in the

course of the actual negotiations. In this connexion a reference might be made in particular to documents COM.TD/W/139 and Addenda and COM.TD/W/205 issued in May and October 1973 respectively, which deal with the structure of duties and non-tariff measures in the sector of tropical products and also contain information on trade flows for a range of such products, and document COM.TD/W/203 which provides data on quantitative restrictions, quotas, State trading, licensing requirements, etc. on products in which developing countries have notified an export interest.

IV. Discussion of issues relating to the multilateral trade negotiations and of GATT negotiating techniques and procedures within the framework of the Commercial Policy Training Courses organized by the GATT secretariat

18. The GATT Commercial Policy Courses, arranged in Geneva twice each year, have recently focussed particular attention on the trade negotiations. A part of each course is devoted to such aspects of the negotiations as negotiating techniques, technical preparations for the negotiations, etc., with particular emphasis on the interests and participation of developing countries. There have also been requests for special courses. Thus, in June-July 1973, the secretariat organized a course on the multilateral negotiations in the Spanish language for officials from a number of Latin American countries and in October a shorter course was arranged for officials from member States of the Organization of American States.

Concluding observations

19. It may be noted that, while information is provided above on the broad programme of assistance to developing countries, it is not possible to record details of assistance furnished in response to the numerous ad hoc requests addressed to the secretariat by delegations of developing countries. As governments move closer to the substantive stage of the negotiations, requests for assistance and advice are likely to be more and more closely tied to the actual negotiating situations that may arise.