

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE KENNEDY ROUND

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Committee on Trade and Development had not been established when the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) met at ministerial level in May 1964 to elaborate a trade negotiating plan for the Kennedy Round. Thus, no specific rôle was assigned to that body in connexion with the negotiations when these were initiated.
2. The Trade Negotiations Committee noted the intention to establish a special body for the task of examining and calling attention to any problems arising in the negotiations which were of special interest to developing countries. This body, the Sub-Committee on Participation of Less-Developed Countries, was established to act as a focal point for bringing together all issues of interest to these countries.
3. The Committee on Trade and Development, established in November 1964, was directed by its terms of reference, inter alia, to keep under continuous review the application of Part IV and to formulate proposals for consideration by the CONTRACTING PARTIES in connexion with any matter relating to the furtherance of these provisions.
4. The objectives of the Kennedy Round included efforts to reduce barriers to trade of developing countries on the basis that developed countries did not expect to receive reciprocity from the developing countries. The principal rôle of the Committee on Trade and Development during the negotiations was to conduct periodic reviews of developments against this background and taking into account the commitments entered into by developed countries under Part IV.
5. At its meeting on 5 March 1965, the Committee on Trade and Development adopted certain reporting procedures having regard to the provisions of paragraphs 2(a) and (b) of Article XXXVII and points 1, 2 and 3 of its terms of reference. These procedures, inter alia, provided as follows:

"in addition, ad hoc reports on the activities of the Trade Negotiations Committee and other sub-committees dealing with matters of interest to the less-developed countries in the trade negotiations may be made available to the Committee if this proves necessary, taking into account the security procedure applicable to the trade negotiations;"

It was noted that the work of the Committee could cover suggestions and recommendations to the appropriate negotiating bodies such as, for example, the Trade Negotiations Committee and its Sub-Committee and the Special Group on Trade in Tropical Products. It was, however, also noted that the specific plans for participation of developing countries in the negotiations were being worked out in the Sub-Committee of the TNC and other relevant bodies.

6. Over this period, the reports relating to implementation of Part IV prepared by the secretariat for consideration by the Committee normally incorporated a section on developments in the negotiations including the stage reached in discussions, etc. in the TNC and other bodies. However, it was only from the sixth session of the Committee on Trade and Development held in June 1966, that the Kennedy Round became a regular item on the agenda of the Committee and periodic statements and reports were made to the Committee by the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Participation of Less-Developed Countries which provided background for discussion. Some of these reports reviewed such matters as:

- (i) the situation with regard to the tabling of offers by developing countries;
- (ii) bilateral negotiations between developed and developing countries;
- (iii) possibility of making tariff reductions greater than those provided for in the linear rate on products of export interest to developing countries;
- (iv) possibility of accelerated implementation of concessions, etc.

7. In the context of its review of developments in the negotiations at its eighth session held in Punta del Este in January 1967, the Committee on Trade and Development made certain suggestions and recommendations, one of which concerned the implementation without phasing of concessions of interest to developing countries. This recommendation was taken up by the Sub-Committee on Participation of Less-Developed Countries where it was agreed that a positive result should be aimed at before the first tariff cuts were made. The Committee on Trade and Development also agreed that, after the completion of the negotiations, an analysis of the results for developing countries would be carried out. In July 1967, an ad hoc group was established for this purpose and its report, contained in document COM.TD/49, was examined by the Committee on Trade and Development at its meeting on 21 November 1967 (document L/2912).

8. It might be noted that in addition to discussing developments in the bodies directly concerned with the negotiations, the Committee on Trade and Development also undertook certain work for use in these bodies. For example, early in the negotiations developing countries were asked to specify those products of current

or potential export interest to them on which they wished concessions to be granted. The Committee on Trade and Development drew up and issued a consolidated list of such items. Concurrently, the Committee also gave particular attention to certain issues including action to reduce duties and restrictions on tropical products which were eventually pursued through the relevant negotiating group.

9. After the conclusion of the Kennedy Round, the Committee on Trade and Development continued to follow action reported by developed countries towards advance implementation of Kennedy Round concessions on items of interest to developing countries.