

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BY THE SECRETARIAT TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Committee on Trade and Development has reviewed from time to time the technical assistance needs of developing countries for their effective participation in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. For the Committee's last review in May, a summary of the technical assistance activities of the secretariat, covering the period up to that time was presented in document COM.TD/W/216. The secretariat has continued to provide technical assistance in respect of the various areas of work mentioned in that document.
2. The secretariat is proceeding with the programme of country studies with a view to ensuring that all developing countries participating in the negotiations requesting such studies will have at their disposal the trade, tariff and non-tariff measure data needed by them for the identification of their negotiating interests in respect of different import markets and in respect of the various trade barriers being taken up for negotiation.
3. In the light of the procedures for negotiations adopted in the Group "Tropical Products", the secretariat has, on request from interested developing country delegations, provided technical assistance by way of identification of tariff and non-tariff treatment applicable to individual products and of trade flows in these items, in connexion with the preparation of request lists for concessions. Where developing countries have found it necessary to revise their request lists following consultations with countries to which requests have been addressed, or have decided to include additional items in their lists, the secretariat has provided technical assistance when sought by the delegations concerned. This work is a continuing feature of the secretariat's activities in the field of tropical products.
4. Other activities of the secretariat in this area have included the preparation of a consolidated list of requests on tropical products to provide an overall picture of concessions requested, countries requesting concessions under the same four-digit BTN heading and the countries to which requests have been addressed. This material will be updated as and when considered necessary and useful. In the context of the

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consultations which have been taking place between requesting countries and the countries to which requests have been addressed, the secretariat has, in certain cases, helped to arrange contacts between delegations as well as provide facilities including conference rooms and interpretation. The secretariat has also kept in touch with delegations, mostly on an informal basis, in order to be able to provide the Group with information on developments in the consultations.

5. In response to a request that the secretariat should prepare a system for the rapid evaluation of the implications of different tariff cutting formulae on exports from developing countries to developed country markets, a background note has been circulated. Further work is continuing in the secretariat on this question. Following agreement in the Sub-Group "Quantitative Restrictions" on notification and consultation procedures with respect to quantitative restrictions, the secretariat has assisted developing country delegations in identifying products subject to quantitative restriction which may be of interest to them, in order to provide a basis for the selection of products and restrictions which individual delegations might wish to notify in this area of the negotiations. The secretariat is also in the process of updating the information in COM.TD/W/203/Rev.1 which provides information on import restrictions, trade flows and tariffs at MFN and GSP with respect to items of interest to developing countries identified in the Joint Working Group documentation.

6. It may be noted, in addition, that the secretariat has been responding to an increasing number of ad hoc requests for the compilation of data and documentation required by delegations of developing countries in connexion with particular aspects of commodity and other problems relevant to the multilateral trade negotiations.

7. To facilitate reference by developing countries to points and subjects of specific interest to them which have been taken up in the course of the negotiations, the secretariat has compiled a glossary of selected documents indicating briefly the contents of each paper.

8. The GATT secretariat has also made available senior officials to participate in regional seminars organized under the UNDP/UNCTAD technical assistance project on the MTN so as to contribute to the object of these seminars in enabling Geneva based officials and officials from capitals of developing countries within the regions to exchange views on developments in the multilateral trade negotiations and thus help them to identify more precisely the interests of their countries in the negotiations and to develop negotiating approaches.

9. A continuing task of the secretariat, and in particular of the Special Assistance Unit, is to keep delegations of developing countries which do not have permanent missions in Geneva, or are otherwise prevented from participating in all of the negotiating bodies of interest to them, informed of the ongoing activities of these bodies so that they can keep abreast of developments in the negotiations of relevance to them.