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ACTION BY GOVERNMENTS RELEVANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF PART IV

In response to GATT/AIR/1480, the countries listed below have transmitted to the secretariat the following information in relation to the implementation of Part IV.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Page</u>
Australia	2
Austria	4
Finland	5
Norway	6
Sweden	7
Switzerland	8
United States	9

AUSTRALIA

1. Recent trends in Australian imports from developing countries

Imports from developing countries under the Australian System of Tariff Preferences for developing countries rose from \$A1,648 million in 1975-76 to \$A2,114 million in 1976-77. \$A1,501 million of this trade (over 80 per cent of total imports from developing countries) fell within tariff classifications which were free of duty at most-favoured-nation rates, or were covered by either the tariff preference system or the duty-free concession for handicrafts. More than 70 per cent of the \$A1,501 million was eligible for entry free of duty. This is similar to the distribution of imports from developing countries in 1975-76.

2. Australian System of Tariff Preferences for developing countries

Since our notification of 2 November 1977 (COM.TD/W/261/Add.1), the following beneficiaries have been excluded from the GSP in respect of particular products on the grounds that such imports were causing injury, or threatening to cause injury, to an Australian industry.

- Hong Kong and Taiwan in respect of screws for wood
- Taiwan in respect of tennis and squash rackets and parts therefor
- India and the Republic of Korea in respect of certain welded steel pipe and tube.

As a result of the Australian Government's decision to implement the Industries Assistance Commission's First Report on Multilateral Trade Negotiations - General Rates of Duty, pursuant to devaluation of the Australian dollar in November 1976, many MFN rates of duty were reduced on 29 January 1977. Our subsequent notification to GATT (L/3982/Add.12) shows the effect of these reductions on tariff preferences accorded to developing countries.

3. Market advisory services to developing countries by Australia

A Market Advisory Section within the Australian Department of Trade and Resources provides assistance to exporters in developing countries through product and market analysis, the provision of market contacts and advice on promotional opportunities and techniques in Australia, and the planning and operation of training programmes in Australia in marketing and promotional techniques for officials and businessmen from developing countries.

One of the major activities of the Section is to undertake research and prepare market studies on both a continuing basis and in response to specific requests. Some 180 separate product enquiries from exporters and export promotion organizations in developing countries have been processed during the first eight months of 1978 and assistance has been provided during the same period to a total thirty-two businessmen and trade missions from developing countries.

To maintain contact with the Australian commercial sector and to provide direct practical assistance, two experienced Australian Trade Commissioners have been appointed, one in Sydney and one in Melbourne; their activities are directed by the Market Advisory Section located in Canberra.

A revised edition of the publication - "Guide to the Market - Australia" - to assist businessmen in developing countries in understanding the commercial requirements of the Australian market has been prepared and distributed to ministries and export promotion organizations in developing countries.

An "Index of Australian Importers" has also been published, in association with Peter Isaacson Publications and complimentary copies have been forwarded to Trade Commissioner Posts for distribution in developing countries.

Arrangements are presently being made by the Department to organize an ASEAN Trade Fair in Sydney from 23 to 28 October 1978. The Fair is designed to appeal to a wide trade audience. Approximately thirty exhibitors from each of the five ASEAN countries will participate.

Training of officials and businessmen through export development courses, trainee trade commissioner courses, attachment to the Department and Workshops on various aspects of export promotion is also carried out.

An Export Development Course for Government officials will be held from 19 February to 30 March 1979 and it is expected that twelve participants from nine countries will attend.

A workshop on the "Operation and Management of Trade Commissioner Posts" was organised in co-operation with ITC/ESCAP. It was held in July 1978 and was attended by twenty Government officials from ASEAN countries. A similar workshop for twenty-three Government officials and businessmen from ASEAN countries was held in May/June 1977, on the planning and operation of trade fairs and exhibitions. A series of four seminars on marketing, promotion, tendering and regulations relevant to trade has been conducted for resident commercial representatives of client countries of the market advisory services.

AUSTRIA

As in previous years, Austria endeavoured to improve further the access of developing countries to its market. In particular the following measures were taken in this context:

1. The third stage of tariff reductions within the Austrian Generalized Scheme of Preferences entered into force on 1 July 1977 ("Tropical Products"). For some sixty tariff lines new preferential rates were created or the existing preferential rates reduced.
2. Additional agreements were concluded for the importation of handicraft products duty free or at reduced rates of duty. During the period under review agreements were concluded with Afghanistan, Argentina, Chile, Greece, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal and Rwanda.
3. Austria continued to support the International Trade Centre through the secondment of officers at the expense of Austrian institutions. The Austrian Trade Representatives abroad continued to be at the disposal of interested businessmen from developing countries and contributed substantially to the improvement of trade relations between Austria and developing countries.
4. The Federal Ministry for Finance organized two "Special Training Courses for Senior Custom Officers of Developing Countries". The first course - which took place from 4 April to 2 June 1978 - was attended by fourteen custom officers from eight developing countries; the second course has started on 1 August 1978 and is expected to last until 25 October 1978. It is being attended by fourteen custom officers from nine developing countries.
5. Austrian experts took part in a regional seminar in Nairobi and in an interregional one in Brussels of the UNCTAD/UNDP-Project on GSP.
6. Austria furthermore participates in several international commodity arrangements and is participating in the negotiation of new arrangements, through which the trade relations between industrialized countries and developing countries should be improved.

FINLAND

Since the previous report on the implementation of Part IV Finland has continued her import policy vis-à-vis developing countries in its previous liberal form with the following modification: the rules of origin of the Finnish GSP Scheme have been changed in order to open the possibility of cumulative LDC-origin in cases to be defined. This modification has been made simultaneously by all preference-giving EFTA countries in response to several requests from developing countries.

Cumulative treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences, in the system applied by the preference-giving EFTA countries (Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland), means that a preference-receiving country exporting to one of these EFTA countries is allowed, for the purpose of the origin rules, to regard materials used in production, which have originated in another preference-receiving country with which the exporting country co-operates in a regional economic grouping, as if those materials had originated in the exporting country.

The preference-receiving countries forming part of regional economic groupings which want to be entitled to make use of the cumulation possibilities will have to submit to the EFTA countries their applications.

Regarding the Multilateral Trade Negotiations it should be noted that Finland implemented her concessions in the negotiations on tropical products already in 1977. A number of additional requests by developing countries have been met in Finland's offers in the other fields of the negotiations, but these are still pending the final outcome of the Tokyo Round.

A concrete factor, which has encouraged the consumption of LDC-imports, has continuously been the suspension of the customs duty on coffee. Finland's imports from developing countries have increased steadily and at the same time her trade deficit vis-à-vis the developing countries - even excluding OPEC - has reached a record level.

NORWAY

As a result of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations within GATT concerning tropical products, Norway included a further fourteen tariff items in this sector in its GSP Scheme as from 1 January 1977. The possibility of cumulative treatment for countries co-operating in a regional economic grouping was introduced under the Norwegian GSP Scheme as from 1 July 1978.

Norway is participating actively in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations in GATT, which have as one of their main objectives to secure additional benefits for developing countries.

The Norwegian Government established in February 1977 an office under the Ministry of Commerce and Shipping with the objective of promoting imports from developing countries.

Norimpod (the Norwegian Import Promotion Office for products from developing countries) will act as an intermediary in establishing business contacts between exporters/producers in the developing countries and the Norwegian market for the purpose of creating permanent business relations.

Some of the measures mentioned above were implemented in 1977, but have not been reported previously in connexion with the implementation of Part IV.

SWEDEN

Sweden wishes to notify certain improvements concerning the Swedish GSP Scheme. The number of beneficiary countries has been increased to seventy-eight after the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau, Chad and Turkey during this year. In addition certain new rules concerning cumulative origin for regional groups have been introduced as notified in document L/4472/Add.2.

SWITZERLAND

As from 1 January 1978, the system of preferences has been adjusted in respect of certain foodstuffs (headings 1704, 1902, ex 1907.30, 2107.20), in that the fixed component of the customs duty has been eliminated for GSP beneficiary countries, and only the variable element is charged.

On 1 July 1978 Switzerland, like the other EFTA preference-giving countries, introduced the principle of regional cumulation in respect of the rules of origin regulating the grant of tariff preferences. Details of the new regulations were circulated in document L/4020/Add.2 dated 18 September 1978.

In addition, it should be noted that neither in the current year nor at any time since the introduction of the Swiss scheme of preferences in 1972 has the Government withdrawn any preferential tariff heading from the GSP scheme. This reflects continuity in the implementation of the Swiss scheme of preferences to date.

The trend in imports in the years 1976 and 1977 was mentioned in percentage terms at the last meeting of the Committee. In terms of absolute figures, the situation is as follows:

Total imports by Switzerland increased from Sw F 36,871 million in 1976 to Sw F 43,026 million in 1977 (+ 16.7 per cent) and those from beneficiary countries of the Swiss scheme of preferences increased from Sw F 4,061 million to Sw F 4,960 million (+ 22.1 per cent). Imports covered by the Swiss GSP scheme increased from Sw F 1,587 million in 1976 to Sw F 2,087 million in 1977 (+ 31.5 per cent), and those carried out under preferences from Sw F 642 million to Sw F 905 million (+ 41 per cent) during the same period.

UNITED STATES

The United States have taken the following actions affecting the exports of developing countries in addition to those indicated in COM.TD/100 and COM.TD/W/270.

On 30 June 1978, the President rejected an International Trade Commission recommendation for increased tariffs on stainless steel flatware (COM.TD/100, paragraph 9) as an emergency action under Article XIX. The CONTRACTING PARTIES were advised of the President's decision in document L/4676/Add.1.

COM.TD/W/270 states in paragraph 14 that as of 1 January 1978, the United States had added three products to its GSP Scheme following the review undertaken in the second half of 1977. The United States in fact added four products, TSUS Nos. 121.56, 732.35, 734.99 and 745.62 (see L/4299/Add.9, page 32).

