

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

COM.TD/W/323

27 October 1980

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Committee on Trade and Development  
Forty-Second Session  
11-12 November 1980

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BY THE SECRETARIAT TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

### Note by the Secretariat

1. During the Multilateral Trade Negotiations, the Committee on Trade and Development reviewed the technical assistance activities of the GATT secretariat at each of its sessions in order to provide delegations with an opportunity to offer comments and suggestions on the work being undertaken.
2. At its thirty-eighth session in September 1979 the Committee on Trade and Development had before it document COM.TD/W/296 containing suggestions by the GATT secretariat on areas of work on which technical assistance might be needed by developing countries in the post-MTN period. Delegations expressed the view that the areas listed in COM.TD/W/296 provided a good basis for future GATT technical assistance and at a later meeting confirmed that the Committee would continue to keep under review activities in this respect.
3. At their annual session in November 1979, the CONTRACTING PARTIES in adopting proposals for the future GATT Work Programme, agreed that the technical assistance activities of the GATT secretariat should be continued and re-adapted to meet the requirements of the developing countries in the context of that Work Programme.
4. On 1 January 1980, as part of the organizational restructuring of the GATT secretariat, a Technical Co-operation Division was established, replacing the Special Assistance Unit.
5. The following paragraphs give a brief description of the technical assistance activities of the secretariat since the conclusion of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Other areas of work will no doubt be covered as the work programme of the CONTRACTING PARTIES is carried forward and experience gained with the practical implementation of the Codes.

### Assessment of the MTN results for individual developing countries

6. The secretariat has continued to supply, upon request, information and data to individual developing countries on the results of the MTNs. This has covered, inter alia, information on products of interest to individual developing countries

exported to different developed country markets giving the pre-MTN and post-MTN tariffs, the value of exports, the share and rank of the developing country in total imports in particular developed country markets, showing also main suppliers. This information and data are designed to help developing countries assess for themselves the results of the MTN and to identify marketing possibilities opened up as a result of the negotiations.

#### Assistance on codes

7. Information and explanations relating to the codes and agreements negotiated in the MTN have been provided upon request to developing countries. The secretariat has also, at the request of individual delegations, prepared and made available brief notes and data on specific aspects of the codes.

#### Assistance to least-developed-countries

8. Special attention has been given to providing technical assistance to the least-developed countries. For the Special Commercial Policy Courses for Least-Developed Countries sponsored by Finland, Norway and Sweden and held in January and July/August 1980 to help officials assess the benefits stemming from the Tokyo Round, two detailed notes were prepared. They were (a) the Tariff Results of the Tokyo Round relating to Products of Interest to the Least-Developed Countries, and (b) Background Note on the Codes and other Multilateral Agreements Negotiated in the Tokyo Round, highlighting those provisions which were particularly relevant to the least-developed countries. Post-Tokyo Round tariff information for each country participating in the courses was also furnished.

#### Seminars and country missions

9. The secretariat has made available the services of its officials for participation in regional or sub-regional seminars on the results of the MTN, held under the auspices of various international and intergovernmental bodies.

10. An important activity in recent months has been the carrying out of country missions. At their request, secretariat officials have visited individual countries in the African, Asian and Latin American regions to participate in round-tables or seminars on the GATT and the MTN, and/or to have detailed discussions with officials in capitals on various aspects of the General Agreement and the MTN codes.

#### Other

11. The secretariat has continued to respond to ad hoc requests from developing countries for information or data compilations on various aspects of the MTN or the GATT Work Programme.

12. A continuing effort is made to keep interested delegations, particularly those new to the GATT, or without missions in Geneva, informed of developments of interest to them in the various councils, committees and bodies of the GATT.