

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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Committee on Trade and Development
Forty-Fourth Session
22 July 1981

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

The following items are proposed for the forty-fourth session of the Committee on Trade and Development.

1. Review of implementation of Part IV and operation of the Enabling Clause

(a) Review of implementation of Part IV

In accordance with its terms of reference, one of the main functions of the Committee on Trade and Development is to keep under continuous review the implementation of Part IV of the General Agreement. At the forty-third session of the Committee in March 1981, a number of delegations provided information on certain developments in commercial policy measures relevant to Part IV (COM.TD/107, paragraphs 49-53). For the mid-term review of the implementation of Part IV, a secretariat note summarizing developments in commercial policy measures and other developments of relevance to Part IV since the end-of-year review undertaken by the Committee in November 1980 is being circulated as COM.TD/W/336. In this connexion, delegations may also wish to take into account the information in documents COM.TD/SCPM/W/5 to 9 made available for the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Protective Measures on 23-24 June 1981. The Sub-Committee's report (COM.TD/SCPM/3) appears as a separate agenda item for the session of the Committee (see item 2 below).

(b) Review of the operation of the Enabling Clause

In the light of its primary responsibility for supervision of the implementation of the Decision on Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries, the Committee has agreed that reviews of the operation of the Enabling Clause as provided for in its paragraph 9 might be co-ordinated with the Committee's reviews of the implementation of Part IV, and that any consultations under paragraph 4 of the Enabling Clause would be dealt with on an ad hoc basis. At the March 1981 meeting of the Committee, a number of delegations furnished information relevant to the operation of the Enabling Clause since the previous meeting of the Committee in November 1980 (COM.TD/107, paragraphs 49-53). Notifications of recent changes to GSP schemes, together with other information with respect to the operation of the Enabling Clause, have been summarized by the secretariat as Section II in COM.TD/W/336.

2. Sub-Committee on Protective Measures

The Sub-Committee's report on its meeting on 23-24 June 1981 is available to the Committee on Trade and Development in document COM.TD/SCPM/3.

3. Work on trade liberalization

At the March 1980 meeting of the Committee on Trade and Development, there was a general view that in the light of the Committee's post-MTN activities covering, inter alia, work on trade liberalization with respect to areas of special interest to developing countries, the Committee should initially focus on tropical products, tariff escalation, quantitative restrictions and other non-tariff measures, and possibilities for the advance implementation of m.f.n. tariff concessions with respect to products of interest to developing countries. Further attention was given to these areas, including questions of procedure, at meetings of the Committee in November 1980 and March 1981; a summary of the relevant discussions are to be found in documents L/5074, paragraphs 24-44 and COM.TD/107, paragraphs 14-38.

(i) Tropical products

At the Committee's meeting in November 1980, there was broad agreement that work with regard to tropical products should proceed on a step-by-step basis (L/5074, paragraph 30). As a first step in this connexion, the secretariat was requested to provide detailed data on the commercial policy situation and trade flows for products listed in the Annex to COM.TD/W/319. The hope was expressed that, in the light of the information provided, the Committee would be in a position to exchange views on the post-Tokyo Round situation for these products in each country and thus focus on particular issues and problems which continued to affect access to markets for the exports of developing countries. Accordingly, for the March 1981 meeting of the Committee, the secretariat provided such data with respect to four groups of products, namely, coffee and coffee products (COM.TD/W/328); cocoa and cocoa products (COM.TD/W/329); tea and instant tea (COM.TD/W/330); bananas and banana products (COM.TD/W/331). For the forthcoming session of the Committee, the secretariat is making available data in relation to the following products or groups of products: spices and spice products (COM.TD/W/334); essential oils and resinoids (COM.TD/W/335); oilseeds, vegetable oils and oilcakes (COM.TD/W/337 and Add.1); rubber and rubber articles (COM.TD/W/339 and Add.1), and cut flowers (COM.TD/W/340).

Delegations might wish to offer comments and observations on the material contained in the documentation now available, and consider any suggestions or proposals for making further progress towards trade liberalization in this area.

(ii) Tariff escalation

At its March 1981 meeting, the Committee had an exchange of views (COM.TD/107, paragraphs 26-30) on tariff escalation, including certain technical questions, on the basis of a secretariat note prepared at the request of the Committee on Tariff Concessions entitled "Measurement of Tariff Escalation" (TAR/W/18).

In noting that the matter was also being considered at the meeting of the Committee on Tariff Concessions, the Chairman of the Committee on Trade and Development expressed the hope that at the July meeting of the Committee, delegations would be in a position to have a fuller exchange of views on aspects of relevance to the trade of developing countries.

Following an exchange of views on this matter at a meeting of the Committee on Tariff Concessions on 11 May, the Chairman of the Committee on Tariff Concessions noted, inter alia, the general view that the Committee did have a rôle to play in this area, at least as far as the technical aspects were concerned. While some delegations needed more time to reflect upon the suggestions made and the appropriate approaches to be taken, some others were ready to see work proceed on the study envisaged in the secretariat note. In view of the various comments made, it was agreed that the matter be kept on the agenda of the Committee on Tariff Concessions for future meetings.

Delegations may wish to consider how they might proceed on this matter at the present meeting of the Committee on Trade and Development.

(iii) Quantitative restrictions and other non-tariff measures

At its forty-third session in March 1981, the Committee noted that, in view of the stage reached in the updating of the Joint Working Group documentation, the secretariat would proceed with the collection of relevant information on quantitative and other import restrictions affecting exports of developing countries; data relating to other non-tariff measures affecting exports of developing countries would be taken up when the Inventories of Non-Tariff Measures had been updated. Thus, document COM.TD/W/338 provides information on certain import restrictions affecting products of export interest to developing countries, showing also available trade data including main developing country suppliers and applicable tariff rates (m.f.n. and GSP). A brief survey of past work in GATT in connexion with quantitative and other import restrictions dealing more specifically with points of interest to developing countries is also provided in the secretariat note.

The Committee may wish to have an exchange of views on the material provided in the document as well as on how work on trade liberalization in this area might best proceed.

(iv) Advance implementation of tariff concessions (COM.TD/107, paragraphs 35-38)

At the Committee's meeting in March 1981, members noted the broad approach to consultations and transparency which had been suggested at the November session for dealing with this matter (L/5074, paragraphs 31-37). There was also a suggestion that more precision regarding procedures might be required so as to ensure that the interests of other developing countries were taken into account when specific requests were being considered. The Committee noted that this aspect could be the subject of informal consultations among delegations. Delegations may have comments or observations to make on this matter in the light of any developments which may have taken place since the last meeting of the Committee.

4. Other matters

Delegations might wish to raise for discussion any other matters relevant to the work of the Committee. Under this item, the Committee may also wish to take note of the discussions at the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Trade of Least-Developed Countries scheduled for the second week of July.