

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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Committee on Trade and Development  
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## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

### Note by the Secretariat

1. The Committee on Trade and Development, at its forty-seventh session in July 1982, reviewed the technical cooperation programme of the GATT secretariat. The Committee had before it, for that purpose, document COM.TD/W/359. After its review, the Committee agreed that Ministers be requested to endorse a strengthening of the technical cooperation programme of the secretariat.

2. The Ministerial Meeting of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, held in November 1982, decided to strengthen the technical cooperation programme of the GATT secretariat with a view to facilitating the more effective participation of developing countries in the GATT trading system by responding, inter alia, to increasing requests for seminars and other technical assistance activities.

3. The following paragraph give a brief account of the activities of the secretariat in this respect since the GATT Ministerial Meeting.

#### Seminars and country missions

4. From November 1982 to the end of 1983, the GATT secretariat will have implemented twenty-one missions to developing countries to conduct seminars or to hold discussions on particular issues. This compares favourably with the earlier average of thirteen to fourteen missions a year.

5. During the period under review, three types of missions have been undertaken by GATT officials: trade policy seminars, technical missions, and participation in events arranged by other organizations.

6. Trade policy seminars are organized by the Technical Cooperation Division of the secretariat at the request of individual or groups of developing countries. The aim of these seminars is to assist in a greater understanding of the rules of international trade, the GATT normative system and current trade policy issues with a view to facilitating the more effective participation of developing countries in the GATT trading system. The Technical Cooperation Division prepares the programme for each seminar in consultation with the concerned officials of the country, tailoring the programme to the priorities and requirements of each country. Thus, seminars can be of a general introductory nature, or else of a more specific nature dealing with particular codes or policy issues. The programme for a typical seminar includes, inter alia, a discussion of the basic principles and main provisions of the General Agreement, the dispute

settlement mechanism, the role of GATT as a forum for trade negotiations, the results of the Tokyo Round of MTN and the Agreements elaborated during those Negotiations, the GATT Ministerial Meeting of November 1982 and the follow-up action to the decisions taken by the Ministers. Other items such as trade negotiations among developing countries, the Multi-Fibre Arrangement or procedures for accession to the General Agreement can be added to the programme.

7. Technical missions have also been arranged at the request of developing countries. Officials of the GATT secretariat visited those countries to hold discussions with government authorities on certain specific questions of trade policy, on the provisions of certain Codes or multilateral agreements, or on the existing or proposed trade legislation or procedures of the host country.

8. The GATT secretariat has also made available the services of its officials for participation in seminars, workshops or courses sponsored by other organizations in the UN system, such as UNCTAD, UNDP, or other outside agencies such as PRODEC - Programme for Development Cooperation of Helsinki School of Economics.

#### Regional trade policy seminars

9. Three events of a regional character have taken place since the Ministerial Meeting. First, between 29 November and 11 December 1982, a two-week seminar, sponsored by ASEAN and financed by UNDP, took place in Singapore, for officials of the countries concerned. Then, a seminar for officials of LAIA (Latin American Integration Association) and delegates from its member countries was held, between 21 and 25 March 1983, in Montevideo. Finally, in September 1983, the GATT and ESCAP secretariats organized a two-week regional trade policy seminar in Bangkok for developing countries of the ESCAP region, with the financial support of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, which provided a special contribution for this event.

10. The Bangkok seminar was attended by officials from nineteen developing countries of the ESCAP region. A special effort was made to include participants from the least-developed among developing countries and from island developing countries. The objective of the seminar was to enable senior and middle-level officials to familiarize themselves with the working of the international trading system, with the current issues of trade policy and with the evolution of rules governing the conduct of world trade.

11. The GATT secretariat made all the technical and administrative preparations, selected the participants and sent four GATT Officials to Bangkok to lecture and conduct the seminar. Three lecturers from the Federal Republic of Germany and a high official from a country in the area also participated actively in the seminar. The ESCAP secretariat provided conference facilities and full administrative assistance for this seminar.

### Assistance to least-developed countries

12. Special attention was given during the year to requests for technical assistance from least-developed countries. Assistance in this area has included data and information on export products of interest to least-developed countries and studies on specific trade policy issues. During 1983 seminars were organized in three least-developed countries.

### Assistance in the context of the work of various GATT bodies

13. Upon request of delegations of developing countries, officials of the Technical Cooperation Division and of other Divisions of the GATT secretariat have prepared and made available factual notes and background material on specific subjects under discussion in various GATT bodies, for example information on past rulings relating to interpretation of particular GATT provisions, on anti-dumping and countervailing duty procedures, on licensing requirements, etc. in individual countries.

### Assistance in the context of consultations

14. Officials of the secretariat have provided assistance, upon request, to individual delegations in their preparations for some of the forthcoming consultations e.g. consultations on tropical products. This has been in the form of providing factual information and data on tariffs and trade flows and background documentation as appropriate.

### Ad-hoc request

15. A good part of the technical assistance activities of the secretariat consists of attending to ad hoc requests from officials of developing countries. Such requests cover a number of areas. During the period under review, many of the requests related to trade and tariffs data for products of export interest to a developing country, product studies request by individual delegations, import, export and tariffs data in connection with renegotiation of schedules under Article XXVIII, preparation of loose-leaf schedules and impact of specific tariff and trade arrangements on trade flows from third countries.

### Briefing visiting officials

16. A number of officials of developing countries visiting Geneva were received, during the year, by officials of the Technical Cooperation Divisions and were briefed on the on-going work in the GATT and on developments in various GATT bodies.

17. As in the past, the secretariat has kept in touch with delegations new to the GATT and with other delegations to apprise them of developments in the GATT and to respond to their queries.