

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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Group on Expansion of Trade
Among Developing Countries

SECRETARIAT NOTE ON THE MEETING HELD
IN SEPTEMBER 1966

1. The third meeting of the Group on Expansion of Trade Among Developing Countries was held on 12 and 13 September. At the outset of the meeting, the Group was informed that its Chairman, Mr. L.F. Collymore, had been transferred from Geneva to another important assignment in his Government's service and would, therefore, not be in a position to continue to chair the Group. Appreciation was expressed of the able and efficient manner in which Mr. Collymore had guided the work of the Group. Mr. B.N. Swarup, of India, was elected Chairman of the Group.
2. The Group addressed itself mainly to the question of possibilities for the removal of non-tariff barriers in inter-less-developed country trade. The Group was supplied with a secretariat paper (COM.TD/D/W/5) on import restrictions applied by developing countries on products notified as being of export interest to less-developed countries. While expressing appreciation of the initiative taken by the secretariat, members of the Group considered that, for the purposes of further work in this field, it would be useful if information of this kind could be made available for products of current or potential importance in trade among the developing countries. It was suggested that the secretariat should consult with the developing countries and compile a list of such products. Detailed information relating to the type of import control measures applied on these products, the reasons for the maintenance of these restrictions as well as such relevant data on trade and production as might be available should then be collected and circulated as soon as possible to contracting parties.
3. The Group had an exchange of views on various questions involved in any general scheme for the removal of quantitative restrictions for the expansion of trade among less-developed countries. Reference was made in the discussion to existing arrangements among developing countries providing for mutual trade liberalization and the post-war experience in European trade liberalization. One developing country suggested that such liberalization could best be carried out at least initially within the framework of regional arrangements.

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4. It was agreed that, instead of trying at this stage to draw up specific schemes or formulae for trade liberalization among less-developed countries, it would be useful to see what concrete proposals or arrangements could be formulated through discussions among the less-developed countries themselves. It was suggested that such exploratory discussions among the less-developed countries could conveniently be carried out in the first instance in the informal group of less-developed countries in GATT. The informal group could give attention to the following points:

- (a) the grounds on which restrictions on different products are maintained by individual developing countries and the problems in removing these restrictions;
- (b) the scope for multilateral action by developing countries to remove or reduce quota and non-tariff restrictions affecting their mutual trade;
- (c) the form such multilateral action can take, and any supporting measures that may be adopted, and the procedures that may be followed;
- (d) Any other relevant points (for example, concerning the safeguard of the interests of other contracting parties), and the further examination of such arrangements.

5. The Group considered that the other outstanding points which had been put forward for consideration at the last meeting of the Group on Trade Expansion (set out on pages 3-5 of COM.TD/D/3) might also be taken up by the informal group.

6. It was further agreed that the Chairman of the Group on Expansion of Trade Among Developing Countries, in consultation with interested delegations, would convene its next meeting in the light of the progress made in the discussions in the informal group and other relevant circumstances.