

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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REVIEW OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT

Note by the Chairman

The Decision of 24 October 1953 on arrangements for the review of the Agreement provides for the convening of the Ad Hoc Committee on Agenda and Intersessional Business for two purposes. The first is to recommend a date for beginning the review if the Committee considers that a different date from that laid down in the Decision would be likely to lead to more fruitful results. The second is to prepare an annotated agenda for the review.

The Executive Secretary and I consider that the Ad Hoc Committee should meet during the month of July to consider the first part of this mandate. By that time it should be possible to make a definite recommendation as to the timing of the review and as to the best means of carrying it out. Our present opinion is that it should be possible to begin the review at an early date in November and, provided there is adequate preparation, to complete it within a relatively short period.

It is unlikely that many governments will be in a position to submit specific proposals by 1 July 1954 as recommended by the CONTRACTING PARTIES in the Decision of 24 October 1953. Therefore it will not be practicable for the Ad Hoc Committee at its July meeting to draw up a detailed annotated agenda. I suggest, however, that the meeting would afford a valuable opportunity for an informal exchange of views on the issues which will arise in the review and on the principal lines of thinking on these issues. I hope, therefore, that governments will be able to send senior officials to the July meeting who would be in a position to participate in such informal discussions. Governments which are not members of the Committee are, of course, entitled to be represented at its meetings and I have no doubt that, in view of the importance of the subject, many of them will wish to exercise this right.

If these suggestions are acceptable to the contracting parties, I hope that following the July meeting it will be possible for proposals to be circulated during the course of August and September so that governments will have several weeks to consider them before being asked to discuss them in the November session.

Subject to the views of the contracting parties, I would propose that the Ad Hoc Committee should convene on Monday, 19 July 1954, for a period of approximately one week. If the Committee should decide on a time-table along the lines proposed above, it will no doubt also wish to reconsider the date for the Ninth Session. This I suggest should be somewhat earlier than the date fixed for the review. (The date tentatively fixed for the Ninth Session is 14 October 1954.)