

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/442

28 October 1955

Limited Distribution

CONTRACTING PARTIES
Tenth Session

INTERIM COORDINATING COMMITTEE
FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMODITY ARRANGEMENTS

Nomination of Chairman

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. Since the Economic and Social Council Resolution of 13 September 1951 provides for the nomination of the Chairman of the Interim Coordinating Committee for International Commodity Arrangements by the CONTRACTING PARTIES and the present period of office expires this Session, the CONTRACTING PARTIES should at their Tenth Session nominate the Chairman for the new period. For the benefit of the contracting parties in considering this matter the following background information is submitted.
2. The ICCICA was established by the Economic and Social Council Resolution 30(IV) of 28 March 1947. It was designed to keep informed of, and to facilitate by appropriate means, inter-governmental consultation or action with respect to commodity problems. The Committee has advised the Secretary-General on specific problems in the field of inter-governmental commodity co-operation and on the convening of inter-governmental commodity conferences and study groups. It has prepared reports for the Economic and Social Council and has been responsible for coordinating the work of various inter-governmental commodity groups. It has also prepared each year a statement regarding inter-governmental co-operation in the field of commodity problems. To this has been appended significant documentation and a survey by the Secretary of the current situation as regards a number of commodities important in international trade.
3. The Committee now consists of a Chairman nominated by the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the GATT; a member nominated by the Food and Agriculture Organization and chiefly concerned with agricultural primary commodities; a member chiefly concerned with non-agricultural primary commodities; and a fourth member with wide experience in the problems of countries undergoing development whose economies are primarily dependent on the production and international marketing of primary commodities.
4. Under the terms of ECOSOC Resolution 373 (XIII) of 13 September 1951, the CONTRACTING PARTIES were asked to nominate the Chairman of the ICCICA, and on 23 October 1953, at their Eighth Session, they nominated Sir Edgar Cohen for a period of two years. At that Session it was agreed that the ICCICA's annual report should also be circulated to the contracting parties.

5. The 1953 Report reviewed the considerable activity which had taken place in the commodity field. It was a year of significant changes in the relation between supply and demand and in price levels and was one which saw the renewal of the International Wheat Agreement and the preparation and conclusion of inter-governmental agreements for sugar and tin. As a result of the wider interest in commodity arrangements the Review contained a new chapter related to the general subject of experience gained in the negotiation of commodity arrangements.
6. In its Resolution 512 A (XVII) of 30 April 1954 the Economic and Social Council decided to establish a permanent advisory Commission on International Commodity Trade. By Resolution 557 F (XVIII) of 5 August 1954, the Council decided at its Eighteenth Session (by twelve votes in favour, three votes against and three abstentions) to proceed with the immediate constitution of the Commission and laid down that the ICCICA should, for the present continue to discharge its functions of convening inter-governmental study groups, of making recommendations to the Secretary-General on the convening of commodity conferences, and of coordinating the activities of the individual commodity study groups and councils. The Commission was to assume all other responsibilities hitherto discharged by the ICCICA. It was further decided in the Resolution of 5 August that the Council, in consultation with the Secretary-General, should consider the status and functions of the ICCICA at its Twentieth Session and of the Commission on International Commodity Trade in the future in the light of any important developments in the field, including the results of the discussions by the CONTRACTING PARTIES to GATT, which should be taken into account as soon as possible after these results were known. As the CONTRACTING PARTIES had not completed these discussions the ECOSOC, at its Twentieth Session, postponed consideration of these matters until its Twenty-first Session.
7. The report of ICCICA 1954 did not contain the usual survey of the commodity situation which had hitherto been used by ECOSOC as a background document in connection with its annual consideration of the world economic situation. It merely set out the action taken in regard to study groups and commodity conferences and analysed the salient developments in respect of the commodities concerned. The report also discussed certain questions which had been referred to the Commission in relation to coffee and olive oil and concluded with some general observations on the practical value of study groups in regard to individual commodities.
8. In its first report the Commission on International Commodity Trade proposed a programme of work which included a study of the nature and degree of short- and long-term fluctuations in prices and volume of trade and a review of certain developments in commodity markets. It also recorded the plan of the Commission to make an annual commodity survey and to issue a commodity market bulletin, the first number of which appeared in August 1955. This report was submitted to ECOSOC at its Twentieth Session. The ECOSOC took note of the report and approved the rules of procedure and programme of work submitted by the Commission.