

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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Statement by the Representative of the Royal Government of Cambodia at a Meeting of the CONTRACTING PARTIES on 30 October 1958

The Royal Government wishes, first of all, to thank wholeheartedly the CONTRACTING PARTIES for the favourable arrangements made with regard to Cambodia at their Twelfth Session. My Government would particularly like to express its great appreciation for the time given to it to study the steps to be taken with a view to its acceding to GATT.

My Government has recently decided in favour of the principle of its accession to GATT. The Royal Government could have joined GATT under Article XXVI of the Agreement but it appeared that this procedure would have resulted in a severe loss. In fact, the Schedules of bound concessions that the Royal Government of Cambodia had applied until now, were established and accepted at a time when Indo-China constituted a single customs entity, and were based there on a considerable trade volume.

The trade of Cambodia represents only part of Indo-Chinese trade, and the Schedules which have been negotiated on the basis of such trade represent at present a very heavy burden.

I believe and I hope that the CONTRACTING PARTIES would give sympathetic consideration to this situation, which is prejudicial to the interests of my country.

Cambodia wishes to accede under Article XXXIII. Cambodia is prepared to enter into negotiations with the CONTRACTING PARTIES as soon as the new customs tariff, which is being submitted for approval to the National Assembly, has been introduced.

My Government has, indeed, decided to adopt a new customs tariff, substituting the present tariff which has remained unchanged for a number of years and which, as I stated earlier, was legally binding in respect of the Indo-Chinese Customs Union as a whole. This new tariff, whose nomenclature is based on the Brussels Nomenclature, will include two duty rates, whereas the present tariff, with only one rate column, would not permit the normal application of most-favoured-nation treatment.

My Government wishes that when its accession to GATT comes up for examination, the provisions of Article XXIX, paragraph 3(b) could be taken into account.

There remains one last point to be settled, that of the situation of Cambodia as from 28 October 1958, which is the terminal date fixed by the CONTRACTING PARTIES for the application of the GATT provisions pending my country's accession. The Royal Government is anxious that for this period the CONTRACTING PARTIES should continue to apply the favourable arrangements adopted at the Twelfth Session.

Should the CONTRACTING PARTIES agree to this solution, my Government would be prepared to maintain for the same period the bound concessions included in Schedule XI, Section H, notwithstanding the entry into force of the new tariff, and to apply the other provisions of the General Agreement to the contracting parties to which they were previously applied by France, acting on behalf of the former Indo-China.

To conclude, allow me to recall that Cambodia, a newcomer on the international scene, is in need of all its resources to meet its requirements, and that any favourable measure with regard to us can only be of considerable assistance.

If the suggested arrangement were accepted by the CONTRACTING PARTIES, the obligations undertaken by Cambodia during the intervening period prior to accession would not differ from those of full contracting parties, and the Royal Government would be happy if the CONTRACTING PARTIES could grant it, for this period, the benefit of the advantages and facilities granted to Japan before its accession, and to Switzerland.