

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/1370

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CONTRACTING PARTIES
Seventeenth Session

WORKING LANGUAGES - USE OF SPANISH

Report of the Budget Working Party

1. At the request of the CONTRACTING PARTIES (SR.17/4) the Working Party examined the proposal put forward by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the group of Spanish-speaking contracting parties that the Spanish language be progressively introduced as a working language. The Working Party had before it the note prepared by the Executive Secretary on the subject (document L/1355).
2. The majority of the Working Party, including the United Kingdom which had reserved its position during the discussion in the plenary meeting of 10 November, were agreed on the principle of the introduction of Spanish as a working language, but felt that the full extent to which this should be done and also the question of timing should be further studied by the Council in the light of the considerable impact on the future budgets of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.
3. Two members opposed for practical reasons the introduction into the GATT of any other working language in addition to the two official languages (English and French) so far used by the CONTRACTING PARTIES.
4. The Working Party then examined the financial implications to the 1961 Budget Estimates of the introduction of Spanish under any of the formulae mentioned in document L/1355. In this connexion the Working Party obtained further information from the secretariat concerning the additional overhead expenses referred to in paragraph 5 of document L/1355.
5. After examining the total cost under the various formulae mentioned in document L/1355 and noting that as a result of the serious financial difficulties encountered by many contracting parties in meeting the cost of the increased 1961 Budget it had been necessary to effect considerable reductions in the original estimates presented by the Executive Secretary, the Working Party came to the unanimous conclusion that in the circumstances any introduction of Spanish during the coming financial year could only be on a no-cost basis.

paragraph 6 over

6. Consequently, the Working Party recommends to the CONTRACTING PARTIES that:

- (a) For the year 1961 they agree to the introduction of simultaneous interpretation during all plenary meetings of the CONTRACTING PARTIES and the Council from Spanish into English and French;
- (b) The secretariat endeavour, within the resources of the 1961 Budget, to provide for a limited amount of translation of Spanish text into English and French;
- (c) That the question of the further introduction of Spanish beyond 1961 should be referred to the Council for further study.

7. The two members mentioned in paragraph 3 of this report, whilst maintaining their position, did not wish to disassociate themselves from the recommendation mentioned in paragraph 6 above.

8. A representative of Uruguay, which country had introduced the proposal, and other representatives of the Spanish-speaking countries participated in the discussion of this item.