

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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CONTRACTING PARTIES
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RELATIONSHIP OF LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO THE WORK OF GATT

Proposal by the Government of the United States

The trade problems of the less-developed countries are of increasing concern to the contracting parties, which have been giving close attention to them. The discussion of these matters in the GATT, and particularly in Committee III, has contributed to a broader understanding of their importance and urgency, and particularly to the significance of trade for economic development. From this understanding and resulting action should flow important benefits to all contracting parties but particularly and more directly to the less-developed countries of GATT.

These countries have shown a keen interest in the development of this important aspect of the activities of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, but this interest is shared by other less-developed countries, countries which have so far not been prepared to accede to the General Agreement and thus to participate actively in its work. Concrete evidence of this interest is found in the recent Declaration of the Cairo Conference on Problems of Economic Development, a conference which included a number of countries not parties to the GATT. Included in the final Declaration was the following statement: "The Conference invites the participating Governments to cooperate effectively within the framework of GATT for the purpose of protecting their common interest." This broad interest in those aspects of GATT's work relating to the trade problems of the less-developed countries is also reflected in the presence at the twentieth session of a large number of observers from non-member less-developed countries.

In the light of this interest, the Government of the United States believes that it would be desirable to examine ways and means by which less-developed countries which are not now parties to GATT but consider that the GATT is the appropriate place to deal with trade problems, may contribute to and participate in the work of GATT of particular interest to them. In view of the shortness of time remaining in the present session and the importance of the matter involved, it is recognized that it would not be feasible for such an examination to be completed before the present session is over. The Government of the United States thus proposes that the CONTRACTING PARTIES request the Council to undertake this examination and make appropriate recommendations on this matter.

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