

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/3148

29 November 1968

Limited Distribution

CONTRACTING PARTIES  
Twenty-Fifth Session

Original: French

## CENTRAL AFRICAN ECONOMIC AND CUSTOMS UNION

### Statement by the Representative of Gabon

On 8 December 1964 a Treaty establishing a Central African Economic Customs Union was signed at Brazzaville between the Federal Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), the Gabonese Republic and the Republic of Chad.

Since that date, trade between the Republics that signed the Treaty has been increasing continuously, reaching substantial proportions in the course of 1967, and furthermore there has been a particularly encouraging expansion in trade between these countries and the other contracting parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, in particular the European Economic Community member States, the United States, Great Britain, Japan, etc.

It should be noted that on a number of occasions our Governments have demonstrated that the provisions of the Treaty were not contrary either to the spirit or to the letter of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

As you can see, this increase in the volume of trade is particularly encouraging because the customs barriers formerly existing between these States have been abolished.

Having regard to the efforts already undertaken, it seems probable that the provisions of Article 4 can be applied in an appropriate way as between the Central African Economic and Customs Union and the other contracting parties.

In the event that one or more States denounce the 1964 Agreement, as already envisaged by the Central African Republic and the Republic of Chad, as from 1 January 1969, it goes without saying that the other participants in the former Central African Economic and Customs Union - namely the Federal Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) and the Gabonese Republic - will continue their endeavours, while restructuring them in the best interests of the member States and in the light of the experience gained over four years of operation.

To this end, the three heads of State and Prime Ministers of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) and the Gabonese Republic met at Port Gentil in June 1968.

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Last month they met again at Yaoundé to study practical arrangements for the tripartite union in its new form.

Once the work undertaken has been completed satisfactorily, the contracting parties will be informed without fail of the provisions of the new agreements.

At the present juncture, however, it seems to us premature and even inopportune to present a study on this question to you, because the heads of States concerned are far from having finished outlining the tasks to be undertaken.

We can, however, assure you here and now that as soon as possible the Federal Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) and the Gabonese Republic will make a point of informing the contracting parties to GATT of whatever provisions have been drawn up jointly, and we are sure that these will not adversely affect the interests of the signatory countries of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.