

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES Note by the Secretariat

1. The technical co-operation programme of the GATT secretariat is periodically reviewed by the Committee on Trade and Development. The Committee last reviewed the programme at its Fifty-First Session held in November 1983 when it had before it secretariat document COM.TD/W/396.

2. In pursuance of the Decision taken at the Ministerial meeting of the CONTRACTING PARTIES held in November 1982, the technical co-operation programme has been strengthened and reoriented to meet effectively the increasing number of requests for assistance from developing countries.

3. A brief account of the technical co-operation activities of the secretariat since the Fifty-First session of the Committee on Trade and Development is given in the following paragraphs.

Seminars and country missions

4. The secretariat has continued to respond to requests of developing countries by sending missions to these countries to conduct trade policy seminars or to hold discussions on specific trade policy issues.

5. During the year, a number of seminars were held in developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Most of these seminars were general trade policy seminars covering, inter alia, the role and functions of GATT, basic principles of the General Agreement, its main provisions, the dispute settlement procedures, the agreements negotiated during the Tokyo Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, the GATT Ministerial meeting of November 1982 and the Ministerial Work Programme, the Multi-fibre Arrangement and problems affecting trade between developed and developing countries. The programme of each seminar is drawn up keeping in view the needs and requirements of the developing country concerned. In some of the general seminars, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT also participated to cover items on trade promotion.

6. Some of the seminars were specialized, focussing on one or two subjects, for example, subsidies and countervailing measures, anti-dumping or technical barriers to trade. There was a growing interest in specialized seminars during the year which provided an opportunity to officials of the host country to engage in an in-depth discussion of the provisions of the relevant MTN Agreements, their implementation and operation.

7. A few general-cum-specialized seminars were also organized wherein part of the time was devoted to the General Agreement, the Tokyo Round Agreements, the Ministerial Work Programme, etc., and the remaining time spent on detailed discussion of one or two subjects.

8. In addition to seminars, technical GATT missions visited developing countries, at their request, to hold discussions with the officials in capitals on specific trade policy issues.

Short course for Asian and Pacific developing Commonwealth countries

9. The technical Co-operation Division, in collaboration with the Training Division, organized, in Geneva, a three-week short course on Trade Policy from 7 to 20 July 1984 for officials of Asian and Pacific developing Commonwealth countries. The course was sponsored by the Commonwealth Regional Consultative Group on Trade (CRCGT) and was attended by ten officials whose travel and per diem expenses were arranged by the CRCGT. The services of the GATT officials, course material and conference room and other facilities were provided by the GATT secretariat as part of its technical assistance activities.

Technical assistance relating to the Ministerial Work Programme

10. Technical assistance was provided to delegations of developing countries, upon request, relating to different items of the Ministerial Work Programme, in particular in the context of Part IV consultations, consultations on tropical products, trade in agriculture and the work on quantitative restrictions and other non-tariff measures. This generally took the form of providing factual information, tariffs and trade data, help in the preparation of notifications and assistance in following prescribed procedures.

Assistance to least-developed countries

11. The secretariat has continued to give priority attention to the technical assistance needs of least-developed countries. Statistical data on tariffs, non-tariff measures and trade flows relating to export products of least-developed countries was made available upon request.

12. During the period under review, GATT technical missions visited the Central African Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania in connection with their consultations in the Sub-Committee on Trade of Least Developed Countries. The secretariat also provided assistance to other least-developed countries in the context of these consultations.

Work of various GATT bodies

13. The delegations of developing countries have frequently called upon the officials of the Technical Co-operation Division and of other Divisions of the secretariat for assistance in following the work of the different GATT bodies. The secretariat officials have responded to these requests by making available appropriate information, background documentation and factual notes designed to help delegations to acquaint themselves more adequately with the matters under discussion in these bodies. Upon request, assistance has also been provided to help developing countries meet their notification obligations.

Ad hoc requests

14. Ad hoc requests from developing countries for technical assistance continued to be attended to by the Technical Co-operation Division of the secretariat. These requests related to tariffs and trade data, information on non-tariff measures, product studies, preparation of loose-leaf

schedules and data and factual information required in the context of the balance-of-payments consultations.

15. The secretariat officials have made an effort to brief delegations of developing countries, particularly those new to Geneva and those from smaller countries, on the current activities of GATT, on developments in various GATT bodies and on issues of particular interest to individual delegations. Officials of developing countries visiting Geneva, who desired to update themselves on specific GATT activities, were similarly briefed. In addition to briefing individual officials as and when they so request, the Technical Co-operation Division, in consultation with delegations from developing countries, is considering the organization of periodic briefing sessions to inform delegates of the state of various GATT Committees and bodies.

Technical assistance in the textiles area

16. Acting on the requests of the developing countries made in the Textiles Committee, the secretariat appointed a Technical Consultant (Textiles) to provide technical assistance to the MFA participants, particularly the developing countries among them. Such assistance has been made available to individual delegations, upon request, in the form of background material, etc., required for examination or analysis of general or specific problems in the textiles field; in obtaining statistical and analytical data bearing on textile industry and trade; in ensuring that countries interested in textile trade are kept fully in the picture with respect to any developments affecting textiles which may emerge in other areas of GATT activities; and in keeping in touch with any documentation regarding new developments or forecasts affecting the textile industry. Many delegations of developing countries have also sought assistance in securing background material relevant to issues arising in multilateral or bilateral negotiations, Textiles Surveillance Body and the Working Party on Textiles and Clothing.