

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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## TECHNICAL COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

### Note by the Secretariat

1. At its Fifty-Fourth Session in November 1984, the Committee on Trade and Development reviewed the technical cooperation programme of the GATT secretariat. For that purpose, the Committee had before it secretariat document COM.TD/W/420.
2. The technical cooperation programme, which has been strengthened and reoriented in pursuance of the decision taken at the Ministerial Meeting of the CONTRACTING PARTIES held in November 1982, is aimed at facilitating the more effective participation of developing countries in the GATT trading system.
3. The following paragraphs give a brief account of the technical cooperation activities of the secretariat since the Fifty-Fourth Session of the Committee on Trade and Development.

### Seminars and country missions

4. There has been a continuing demand from developing countries for trade policy seminars and country missions with the result that this has been an important area of technical cooperation activities during the period under review.
5. The Technical Cooperation Division of the secretariat has organized a number of trade policy seminars in developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. These seminars were organized at the request of individual developing countries or groups of developing countries.
6. The seminars are either general trade policy seminars or specialized seminars. General trade policy seminars are designed to assist the participants in a greater understanding of the rules of international trade and the working of the multilateral trading system. A typical seminar might cover, inter alia, the basic principles and main provisions of the General Agreement, Tokyo Round agreements and arrangements, the GATT Ministerial Meeting of November 1982 and the implementation of the GATT Work Programme of 1982. The programme of each seminar is prepared in consultation with the concerned officials of the host country and reflects their priorities and requirements.
7. Specialized seminars are devoted to a discussion of one or two particular subjects. For example, during the year, specialized seminars were organized on technical barriers to trade, subsidies and countervailing measures or on the regulation of international trade in textiles and clothing. General-cum-specialized seminars have also been organized at the request of different countries.

8. The secretariat has also made the services of its officials available for participation in seminars or courses arranged by other organizations such as UNCTAD, UNDP or the Programme for Development Cooperation of the Helsinki School of Economics (PRODEC).

9. Technical missions comprising officials of the GATT secretariat have visited the capitals of certain developing countries or the headquarters of some regional or sub-regional organizations, at their request, to hold discussions on specific trade policy questions or to advise them on certain of their on-going programmes.

#### Regional trade policy seminars and workshops

10. Four regional trade policy seminars or workshops have been organized since the Fifty-Fourth Session of the Committee on Trade and Development.

11. A one week general trade policy seminar for officials of the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in March 1985. The GATT secretariat provided the services of its officials for conducting the seminar while the travel and other expenses of the participants were borne by the respective governments.

12. A two-week workshop, sponsored by ASEAN and financed by the UNDP, was held in Bangkok between 13 and 24 May 1985. The workshop was attended by trade policy officials from the ASEAN countries. The GATT secretariat provided the substantive input for the workshop in the form of lecturers and background documentation.

13. A trade policy workshop for the developing countries of the ESCAP region, with the financial support of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, was held at the ESCAP headquarters, Bangkok, from 2 to 6 September 1985. This was a follow-up to the Regional Trade Policy Seminar held in Bangkok in September 1983. A total of seventeen senior/middle level trade policy officials from eleven developing countries of the ESCAP region participated in the workshop. Two of the participants came from least developed countries of the region. The workshop was organized by the GATT secretariat in cooperation with ESCAP. Technical and administrative arrangements were made by the GATT secretariat and two of its officials conducted the workshop while the ESCAP secretariat provided conference facilities and administrative assistance in Bangkok.

14. Another regional event was a general trade policy seminar for member countries of the Central American Common Market (CACM) which was held in Costa Rica between 9-13 September 1985.

15. The possibility of securing financial contributions from industrial contracting parties is being explored so as to meet requests for regional seminars where the question of travel and subsistence costs for participants may also be involved.

#### Briefing session for delegates

16. In consultation with delegations of developing countries, a three-day briefing session was organized by the secretariat in February 1985, as part of its technical cooperation activities. The objective of the briefing session was to inform officials, especially those who were newcomers to Geneva, on an informal basis about the ongoing activities of GATT and the

work of various GATT bodies. The session was open to delegations of all contracting parties. About forty officials, most of them from developing countries, participated in the briefing session. The session had been found to be useful and many participants suggested that such sessions may be organized at least once every year.

#### Technical assistance relating to the Ministerial Work Programme

17. The secretariat has continued to respond to an increasing number of requests from delegations of developing countries for technical assistance in relation to various items of the Ministerial Work Programme. The assistance has taken the form of providing information, statistical data, background documentation and factual briefing on the implementation of the Work Programme.

#### Assistance to least-developed countries

18. Technical cooperation with least-developed countries has engaged the special attention of the GATT secretariat. Apart from meeting various ad hoc requests of least-developed countries for data and information, the secretariat has provided assistance to least-developed countries in the context of consultations in the Sub-Committee on Trade of Least-Developed Countries. A GATT mission visited Sudan during the year in connection with their consultations in the Sub-Committee.

19. A general trade policy seminar was organized in Haiti in the beginning of 1985 while two officials from Bangladesh and Maldives were selected to participate in the Regional Trade Policy Workshop held in Bangkok between 2-6 September 1985.

#### Work of various GATT bodies

20. Technical assistance has also been provided to the delegations of developing countries in following the work of various GATT bodies. Factual notes, information and documentation has been supplied, upon request, on different aspects of the work of these bodies.

#### Ad hoc requests

21. Ad hoc requests from delegations of developing countries in respect of tariffs and trade data, information on quantitative restrictions and other non-tariff measures and data and information in the context of balance-of-payments consultations have been attended to by the Technical Cooperation Division of the secretariat.

22. Officials of developing countries visiting Geneva were briefed, upon request, by the officials of the Technical Cooperation Division on the ongoing work in the GATT and on developments in various GATT bodies. The secretariat has also similarly briefed delegations of smaller developing countries, particularly those new to Geneva.

#### Technical assistance in the textiles area

23. The provision of technical assistance in the field of textiles has been maintained during the period under review. The Technical Consultant (Textiles) continued to make available background material and statistical

data to individual delegations upon request. Many delegations of developing countries, particularly small supplying and least-developed countries, have sought assistance in securing relevant material relating to issues arising in bilateral consultations and to matters for consideration by the Textiles Surveillance Body. Many delegations also showed interest in technical analyses of various aspects relating to the main options of trade policy under examination in the Working Party on Textiles.