

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Preparatory Committee

PARTICIPATION IN A NEW ROUND

Note by the Secretariat

1. This note is issued under the responsibility of the secretariat and is intended to facilitate further discussion in the Preparatory Committee. It seeks to identify, in the light of the discussions recorded in PREP.COM(86)SR/4 and earlier discussions, the main considerations which have been raised in relation to the recommendations which the Committee is required to formulate on the question of participation in a new round. This note is not intended to be a summary of the discussions. It in no way prejudices the views that delegations may have as to how issues relating to participation in a new round might figure in the Preparatory Committee's recommendations to Ministers, nor should the listing of points for further discussion be regarded as exhaustive.

Main points emerging from the discussion

2. It was agreed that the new round would be open to all contracting parties. There was wide support for the view that the participation of non-contracting parties in the round would depend in part on the nature and content of the negotiations: it might for example be appropriate for negotiations on revision or improvement of GATT rules to be confined to contracting parties. It was therefore suggested that a final decision on participation could only be taken when the nature of the negotiations was clear. It was also suggested that criteria for participation in different elements of the negotiations might vary according to the nature of the subject at issue.

3. There was nevertheless considerable support for the view that wide participation in the negotiations should in principle be encouraged. Reference was made to the formula adopted for the Tokyo Round. A number of different suggestions were made as to categories of non-contracting parties which might be invited to participate. These included:

- those countries having provisionally acceded to GATT, and those applying the GATT de facto or negotiating for membership, plus former contracting parties;
- all interested developing countries;
- all countries expressing the desire to participate.

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Points for further discussion

4. What criteria should be adopted for the participation of non-contracting parties in the new round as a whole or in specific elements of it?
5. Should criteria for participation in the Ministerial Meeting be the same as for the round?
6. What provision should be made with respect to the attendance of observers, for example from other international organisations, at the Ministerial Meeting and/or at meetings of the Trade Negotiations Committee and negotiating groups?