

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON

RESTRICTED

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Limited Distribution

TARIFFS AND TRADE

Sub-Committee on Trade of
Least-Developed Countries
Eleventh Meeting
28 September 1989

Review of developments in the Uruguay Round of Interest to
Least-Developed Countries

Note by the Secretariat

1. At the thirteenth meeting of the Group of Negotiations on Goods on 25 April 1989 it was agreed that the Chairman should draw the attention of the Chairpersons of Negotiating Groups to the proposals submitted by Bangladesh on behalf of least-developed countries and reproduced in MTN.GNG/14/Rev.1. This action was meant to ensure that all the Groups take into due account the relevant proposals contained in the above-mentioned document and to acquire a good perception of the problems and interests of least-developed countries in the negotiations, especially in regard to the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Punta del Este Declaration. It was understood that it would be for each Negotiating Group to consider the matter in the light of its own responsibilities.
2. This note is meant to review the present situation with regard to the proposals by way of responses made to them in the various negotiating groups.
3. Since the meeting of the Group of Negotiation on Goods in April, the issue has been put on the agenda of the various negotiating Groups. At the meeting of the Negotiating Group on Tropical Products in June the situation of least-developed countries was considered on the basis of a secretariat note MTN.GNG/NG6/W/35 which listed products of export interest to these countries and their respective treatment in the negotiations at the Mid-Term Review. It was noted that many products were still subject to tariff and non-tariff barriers in a number of countries. It was decided to revert to this item at subsequent meetings of the Group.
4. At the meeting of the Negotiating Group on Textiles and Clothing on 9 June 1989 the Chairman recalled, with reference to the proposals of Bangladesh, that a specific provision in the mid-term TNC Decision on textiles and clothing stated that "special treatment should be accorded to the least-developed countries". A participant proposed that, in all stages of the Groups' discussions on the formulation of modalities for the process of integration of the textiles and clothing sector into GATT, the particular problems of the least-developed countries and how special treatment could be accorded to them should be considered.
5. Reference was also made to the proposal of the least-developed countries at the meeting of the Negotiating Group on Non-Tariff Measures on 19 May 1989. The Chairman of the Group recalled that the principles and guidelines which the Mid-Term Review agreement required the Group to take into account when establishing a framework for future negotiations included

the principle relating to the problems of the least-developed countries contained in Part 1B (vi) of the Punta del Este Declaration.

6. At the meeting of the Negotiating Group on the Functioning of the GATT System on 19 and 20 June 1989, the Chairman drew the attention of the Group to the proposals of the least-developed countries, and encouraged participants to reflect on them so that an appropriate response could be made to them. In this respect it might be recalled that the Mid-Term Review Decision in this Group includes a number of measures in favour of the least-developed countries under the Trade Policy Review Mechanism, especially with regard to reporting and frequency of review. It might also be recalled that in the outline format for country reports agreed on following informal discussions it had been recognized that since it might be burdensome for least-developed countries to adhere to the agreed reporting format, a simplified one for least-developed countries should be considered. At the meeting of the Group referred to above, the Chairman stated that the question of a simplified format would be put on the agenda for subsequent meetings of the Group.

7. At the meeting of the Negotiating Group on Dispute Settlement on 12 May 1989, the Chairman drew attention to aspects of the proposals of the least-developed countries concerning dispute settlement. The representative of a least-developed country expressed his willingness to present more detailed proposals at a subsequent meeting of the Group.

8. The Negotiating Group on TRIPs also considered the proposals of the least-developed countries at its meeting on 11 and 12 May 1989 in the light of its particular responsibilities. The representative of a least-developed country said that although the Bangladeshi document did not contain any specific proposal for this Group, his delegation was studying the text adopted by the TNC on TRIPs, notably paragraph 5 relating to development and technological objectives. His delegation looked forward to special treatment being accorded to the LLDCs in any arrangement finally reached in the Group, in accordance with paragraph 2(d) of the enabling Clause. He indicated his delegation's intention to submit specific proposals to the Group in the future. The Chairman said that the Group would have to bear in mind the concerns of the LLDCs and that delegations may wish to revert to this issue later when the nature of commitments envisaged as a result of the work of the Group became clearer.

9. After introducing the subject at the meeting of the Negotiating Group on TRIMs on 8-9 May 1989, the Chairman suggested that the Group could give attention to it in the context of one of the elements which the TNC had agreed to integrate into the negotiating process, namely "development aspects that would require consideration".

10. In the Negotiating Group on Safeguards the draft text of a comprehensive agreement on Safeguards drawn up by the Chairman includes under Section VII provisions for special measures regarding the least-developed and other developing countries. The draft agreement proposed by the Chairman will be subject to detailed examination at the September meeting of the Group.

11. The need for consideration of the proposals submitted on behalf of the least-developed countries was also brought to the attention of the Negotiating Group on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures at its meeting on 28-29 June 1989. The Chairman of the Group expressed the hope that members of the Group would take account of the proposals while preparing their submissions under the framework for negotiations.

12. Negotiations on trade in Services are not governed by the principles outlined in Part 1 of the Punta del Este Declaration. Nevertheless consideration of the special situation of the least-developed countries has been accepted as one of the elements in the negotiations. At the Mid-Term Review it was agreed that "particular account shall be taken of the serious difficulty of the least-developed countries in accepting negotiated commitments in view of their special economic situation and their development, trade and financial needs".