

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON

RESTRICTED

COM.TD/LLDC/W/41

14 September 1989

TARIFFS AND TRADE

Limited Distribution

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

Recent Developments Relating to Trade Interests of Least-Developed Countries

Note by the Secretariat

1. This note reviews recent developments relating to the trade interests of least-developed countries. Section I contains a short outline of recent measures taken in favour of least-developed countries outside the framework of the Uruguay Round. Other measures affecting these countries are also covered. Section II contains a short summary of recent GATT technical cooperation activities involving least-developed countries.

Section I

Recent measures in favour of least-developed countries¹

2. The EEC has with effect from 1 January 1989 accorded duty-free entry to least-developed countries for the following additional agricultural products: fresh pineapples (CCCN 08.04.30.00); mixtures exclusively of dried tropical nuts (CCCN ex 08.13.50.30); other mixtures of dried tropical fruits (CCCN ex 08.13.50.91); all tobacco products (CCCN chapter 24). Finland has as from 1 January 1989 added more items to the list of products covered by its special treatment for least-developed countries namely; tableware, kitchenware, other household articles and toilet articles of porcelain or china (HS No. 69.11), ceramic tableware, kitchenware, other household articles and toilet articles, other than of porcelain or china (HS No. 69.12). With effect from 1 April 1989 the two remaining exceptions to the duty and ceiling-free treatment for the products of least-developed countries in the Japanese GSP scheme were eliminated. The products concerned were Beeswax (HS ex 1521.90 GSP rate 7.5 per cent, LLDC - free); yarn of jute (HS No 53.07 - ceiling limitation eliminated). The modified Polish GSP scheme provides duty-free treatment for all imports from the forty-two least-developed countries.

¹These measures have been notified in the following GATT documents; Austria L/4108/Add.32 and 33, Finland L/3694/Add.19, Japan L/4531/Add.18, Norway L/4242/Add.30, Poland L/5321/Add.1, Switzerland L/4020/Add.16. United States C/W/590/Add.1.

3. In a communication dated 2 December 1988 Norway has notified that Mozambique has been added to the list of least-developed countries which enjoy duty-free treatment for all products under the Norwegian GSP scheme. In similar communications Japan and Finland have notified that the Union of Myanmar (Burma) has been added to the list of least-developed countries with effect from 1 April 1988 and 1 January 1989 respectively. Switzerland has also notified on 31 May 1989 that Mozambique and Vanuatu have been added to the list of least-developed countries eligible for special and more favourable treatment under the Swiss GSP scheme.

Other measures affecting least developed countries

4. According to a decision taken by the United States Administration the Central African Republic and the Union of Myanmar (Burma) have had their GSP benefits indefinitely suspended with effect from 1 July 1989 as a result of the annual review of the United States programme.

Technical cooperation activities

5. Since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee on trade of the least-developed countries, the secretariat has continued to provide technical assistance to these countries. The following paragraphs give a summary of the technical cooperation activities of the secretariat since the 10th meeting of the Sub-Committee.

Tariffs, non-tariff measures and trade data

6. Data on tariffs, non-tariff measures and trade flows in respect of particular products was made available to delegations, on request, in connection with their participation in the negotiations in the areas of tropical products, tariffs and non-tariff measures, and natural resource-based products.

Factual background notes

7. Factual background notes on subjects covered in the Uruguay Round negotiations were also prepared and made available on request to LLDC delegations.

Briefing of delegations and officials

8. Visiting officials and delegations from the capitals of a number of least-developed countries were given briefings on the progress of the Uruguay Round in sectors of their particular interest.

Country missions and seminars

9. The secretariat organized national trade policy seminars in Sudan and Haiti in February 1989 and June 1989 respectively. These national seminars covered all aspects of GATT's work as well as the Uruguay Round trade negotiations, and were designed to assist officials in national administration to a clearer understanding of the nature and operation of the rules of international trade and the multilateral trading system, and the nature, scope and objectives of the Uruguay Round trade negotiations.

10. Apart from national seminars, the secretariat organized or participated in a number of regional trade policy seminars during the period under review. A regional seminar on GATT and the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations was organized in Bangkok in July 1989, for officials of least-developed countries, members of ESCAP, with the financial support of the Government of Norway. The secretariat also participated in and provided technical support to a regional seminar organized by the Secretariat of the ACP Group of States at Lusaka (Zambia) from 12 to 16 September 1988. It also assisted in two further inter-regional seminars on the Uruguay Round organized by the Canadian Institute for Research on Public Policy, one for East and South African countries in Nairobi (Kenya) October 1988, and the other for West African countries in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) in October 1988.

11. In the period under review, the GATT secretariat participated in regional seminars organized by other international organizations. GATT representatives attended workshops organized by UNCTAD for Central and West African countries in Lomé (Togo) in February 1989 and for countries members of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) in Lusaka (Zambia) in May 1989, and by the Commonwealth Regional Consultative Group on Trade (CRCGT) in Sydney (Australia) in May 1989, for commonwealth countries of the Asian and Pacific Region.