

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON

TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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ASEAN FREE-TRADE AREA

COMMON EFFECTIVE PREFERENTIAL TARIFF

Communication from the United States

The following communication, dated 28 January 1993, has been received from the Office of the United States Trade Representative in Geneva with the request that the matter be inscribed on the Agenda of the Council meeting on 9 February.

At their January 1992 Summit, the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) concluded the "Agreement on the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) Scheme for the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)." As announced, beginning 1 January 1993, the scheme will reduce duties on tariff-line items over a 15-year period to rates between zero and five percent.

The United States welcomes and supports ASEAN's announced intentions to create a free trade area. Concrete steps toward that goal such as the CEPT are, however, a significant development in the multilateral trading system and warrant full review in this body. Other countries are subject to no less scrutiny.

The United States therefore requests that the Governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand fully notify this new program to this body (the GATT Council), including providing schedules of included and excluded products and timetables. We request that this notification be presented in this body because we believe it is best suited to examine fully the implications of the new agreement for all Contracting Parties.

Pending receipt of this documentation, the United States reserves its rights regarding obligations of ASEAN contracting parties under the General Agreement.