

**GENERAL AGREEMENT
ON TARIFFS AND TRADE**

RESTRICTED
COM.TD/W/511
16 November 1994
Limited Distribution

(94-2444)

Committee on Trade and Development
Seventy-Seventh Session
21 and 25 November 1994

TECHNICAL COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Committee on Trade and Development reviews periodically the technical cooperation programme of the GATT Secretariat. This note gives a brief description of technical assistance activities since the Seventy-Sixth Session of the Committee in November 1993.

2. Since the last review, the programme has mainly been focused on assisting developing countries in the preparation of their offers in market access and services, as well as in the work relating to the ratification and the implementation of the Uruguay Round Agreements. Technical cooperation activities in the post-Uruguay Round period have increased considerably and, within the limits of the resources available, will continue to increase in the future. This expansion is due to a number of factors: the larger number of countries that are seeking technical assistance in general; requests resulting from countries having acceded recently; the more intensive participation by many developing countries in the work of the GATT; and the considerably wider, increased coverage of subject areas in which assistance has to be provided. The already large number of requests for seminars and technical missions to be organized in 1995 requires an advanced and careful planification of activities, both within the Secretariat and in its interaction with delegations or governments seeking technical assistance. Advance planning will increasingly be of the essence, and consequently, activities will need to be programmed and staged over a period of several months.

3. In order to ensure effective and coherent action by the GATT Secretariat in the area, the Technical Cooperation and Training Division (TCTD) has responsibility for the general coordination of all technical assistance the GATT provides and acts as the focal point for its implementation. In a majority of cases the assistance requested is for missions or other activities cutting across the different major areas of the GATT/WTO (Uruguay Round). Such general activities are serviced by staff in TCTD or in other Divisions elsewhere in the GATT, who have a correspondingly broad knowledge of the multilateral instruments. In addition, when required by the specificity of the technical mission, the Division draws on officials from other operational divisions and coordinates these missions.

Data, Information and Background Notes

4. Data on trade flows, tariffs and non-tariff measures needed for consultations and negotiations have often been made available, upon request, to delegations of developing countries. Information was also provided to help developing countries in assessing, with reference to their export trade interests, other countries' offers in market access in goods. Since the conclusion of the Uruguay Round negotiations, TCTD has continued to provide a large number of developing countries with such information.

5. Developing countries have also received technical assistance designed to help them assess the impact of specific commitments on services made by developed countries on developing countries services trade.

6. Upon request, factual background notes on specific issues in different areas of the negotiations and of their results were carried out for delegations of developing countries. In this process, special attention was given to the technical assistance requirements of least-developed countries. Requests have been received from developing countries for technical assistance in framing new legislation to implement Uruguay Round Agreements or in revising existing legislation to bring it into conformity with the Agreements.

Seminars, Technical Missions and Workshops

7. During the present year, TCTD organized some sixty seminars and technical missions on the GATT and the Uruguay Round in different countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America with the objective of presenting and explaining the Uruguay Round results, both generally and in particular with regard to the technically more complex areas. Some of the seminars were addressed to countries contemplating accession to the GATT.

8. Between November 1993 and October 1994, a number of technical cooperation missions visited different capitals to assist officials in the preparation of their schedules of concessions and commitments on market access and services. Particular attention was paid to least-developed countries and smaller developing countries in Africa.

9. A number of regional or sub-regional seminars, of a general or specialized nature, took place between November 1993 and October 1994 on the Uruguay Round results. General regional seminars were held for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries at Abu Dhabi in April 1994 and for ALADI countries at Montevideo in November 1994. A regional seminar took place on agriculture for the Baltic States at Riga in May 1994. Specialized regional seminars took place on services for ESCAP countries at Bangkok in October 1994, and on anti-dumping and countervailing measures for Latin American countries at Caracas in October 1994. Two sub-regional seminars on the Uruguay Round results took place for the Andean Group countries at Lima in June 1994 and for Central American countries at San Salvador in September 1994. Two regional technical missions took place on the elaboration of rules for services for Andean Group and ALADI countries.

10. As part of the activities of a priority nature, in October 1994, the GATT Secretariat collaborated closely with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in the organization of and participation in an international conference on the Uruguay Round and African countries held in Tunis - having previously made contributions to two other ECA Ministerial Meetings, in the previous twelve months.

Briefing Sessions for Delegations and Officials

11. In Geneva, briefings of delegations and visiting officials of developing countries have been a regular feature of the technical assistance programme. Briefings were either given for individual delegations and officials or in the form of briefing sessions for a number of delegations. In the former case, Geneva-based delegations or visiting officials from capitals were briefed on the progress of Uruguay Round negotiations in general, as well as in areas of special interest to them, and on the final results of the negotiations. In the latter case, a briefing session was organized in March 1994 on the main provisions of the Uruguay Round Agreements for GATT developing contracting parties, acceding countries and observers.

12. Also in March 1994, a large GATT Secretariat delegation participated in Brussels in a briefing session on the Uruguay Round addressed to African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) participating in the Uruguay Round negotiations. This briefing session took place at the ACP Group Secretariat's headquarters.

Dispute Settlement Course

13. Following the Montreal Decision related to dispute settlement, the Technical Cooperation and Training Division organized, jointly with the Legal Affairs Division, a Dispute Settlement Course which took place in Geneva in September 1994. The course, which dealt with the legal and procedural elements of dispute settlement, included also simulation exercises. Additional assistance was provided with reference to the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes which specifically requests that a qualified legal expert from the technical cooperation services of the Secretariat be made available to any developing country member which so requests.

Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM)

14. Technical assistance in the preparations of their trade policy review has been provided to requesting developing countries. Also, assistance was given to developing countries to enhance their active participation in trade policy reviews of other countries.

Least-Developed Countries

15. Special assistance was provided to least-developed countries in regard to their participation in the closing stages of the Uruguay Round negotiations. Subsequently, GATT Missions have visited several least-developed countries since the beginning of 1994 to explain the Final Act and to assist them, upon request, in the preparation of their offers on market access and services. Delegations of least-developed countries in Geneva were briefed on a systematic basis on the progress of negotiations. Since April 1994, they have received, upon request, documentation specifying the benefits of the Uruguay Round results which could be used in the preparation of their internal ratification processes.

Technical Cooperation Project with the World Bank

16. For the first time, an agreement between the World Bank, a contracting party and the GATT has been signed, through which the World Bank is financing a technical assistance project to build up the capacity of a government to comply with the multilateral trade rules. The GATT has accepted to act as executing agency in the conduct of a project which comprises a fellowships' programme, on-site consultant services and specialized seminars and workshops, with the aim of establishing a national structure for safeguards, anti-dumping and countervailing duty investigations.

Joint technical assistance with other international organizations

17. TCTD is in direct contact with a number of other international organizations which also provide technical assistance on trade matters. The established line of action is to collaborate on an informal, case by case, basis in the activities of these international organizations whenever GATT's participation is considered as complementary or additional to their activities, based on the statutory mandate to provide technical cooperation in its own well defined areas of responsibilities. In this context and upon specific request, TCTD has coordinated participation by GATT officials in several workshops set-up by other international organizations for developing countries on issues related to the Uruguay Round negotiations, their results and other trade policy matters.