

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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Special Distribution

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CONTRACTING PARTIES  
Ninth Session

Legal and Drafting Committee

## DRAFTING IMPROVEMENTS APPLICABLE TO THE FRENCH TEXT

### Note by the Legal and Drafting Committee

The experience gained in the application of GATT in the past years has shown that the French text involves a number of unintended discrepancies with the English text as well as a substantial number of internal discrepancies and of drafting imperfections.

The terms of reference of the Committee require that the Committee should remove the drafting imperfections in both authentic texts and that it should ensure strict correspondence between the two texts. The Committee believes that, as far as the French text is concerned, this could best be done in the following manner, in view of the time factor:

(a) in the case of paragraphs or articles where drafting or substantial changes have been made in the course of this Review, other changes relating only to the French text and designed to eliminate drafting imperfections in that text shall also be made in the French text;

(b) in the case of articles or paragraphs where no changes have been made in the English text in the course of this Review, the changes to be effected in the French text only for the sake of improving the drafting would be made by a special protocol to be drawn up immediately after the Review, so that it will be available for Governments to present to the legislatures, where this is necessary, at the same time as the other amendments previously effected within the framework of this Review.

It is hoped that this plan will meet with the approval of the CONTRACTING PARTIES since it will not otherwise be possible to have a French text removing the imperfections of drafting in the French text, in time for signature at the end of this week. The Legal and Drafting Committee realises that difficulties may arise in this connection out of the rule recently established that proposed amendments require the approval of two thirds of the CONTRACTING PARTIES. But this difficulty can be overcome either by waiving this rule in this particular case, or by approval by postal ballot or, if the CONTRACTING PARTIES see fit, by a prior approval before the text is finally established; the last course would not preclude any contracting party from objecting to the terms of the protocol if it finds that it involves any substantial change. But the CONTRACTING PARTIES may wish to examine the actual text of the proposed drafting amendments before giving their approval and in this case, the use of a postal ballot seems the most satisfactory course.