

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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CONTRACTING PARTIES
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ACCESSION OF TUNISIA

Statement by the Representative of Tunisia at the Meeting of the CONTRACTING PARTIES on 4 November 1959

On behalf of the Tunisian Government I would like to thank the CONTRACTING PARTIES for adopting the recommendation of 22 November 1957 at their twelfth session and the recommendation of 25 May 1959 at their fourteenth session, as a result of which the provisions of GATT which had applied de jure to Tunisia before it acquired full independence continued to apply after Tunisia acquired independence.

As provided in the Decision of 25 May 1959, this de facto application will end two weeks after the commencement of this session.

Far from requesting an extension, the Government of the Tunisian Republic would wish the present status to be substituted by a de jure system. To this end we wish to request for Tunisia the honour to accede to the General Agreement under Article XXXIII.

If the CONTRACTING PARTIES have no objection, Tunisia would accede on a provisional basis pending the 1960-61 round of tariff negotiations in which we are anxious to participate. In the meantime, our new customs tariff, which entered into force on 1 October 1959, would continue in application. The new tariff meets the present needs of our economy and the rates of duty are lower on the whole than the previous ones.

I wish to recall that Tunisia has never ceased to apply the provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade either de jure or de facto.

I would also wish to emphasize that the foreign trade policy followed by the Tunisian Government is in conformity with the liberal principles of the General Agreement.

Thus, at the beginning of 1959 we made our national currency, the dinar, convertible for non-residents. The benefits of trade liberalization which had been limited to the OEEC countries have now been extended on a non-discriminatory

basis to all countries with convertible currencies, including the dollar area. Lastly, bilateral quotas are being gradually replaced by free imports or placed under a system of global quotas. Furthermore, we have no monopolies in the field of foreign trade.

For the sake of completeness, I must add that the Franco-Tunisian Customs Union Convention of 28 December 1955 has been terminated and replaced by a Trade and Tariff Convention, dated 5 September, which places the economic relations between France and Tunisia on a realistic basis, much closer to the concept of general law.

Finally, as I said earlier, our new tariff which entered into force on 1 October 1959 is more liberal than the former customs union tariff.

Thus the economic and trade policy of our country is largely based on the liberal principles of the General Agreement, although we are mindful of the requirements of economy. I hope that our application for provisional accession, and final accession later, will receive full sympathy from the CONTRACTING PARTIES.