

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

MIN(73)SR
28 September 1973
General Distribution

MINISTERIAL MEETING
Tokyo, 12-14 September 1973

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE MEETING

Chairman: H.E. Mr. M. Ohira (Japan)

Subject discussed: The Multilateral Trade Negotiations
(MIN(73)W/1, MIN(73)W/2)

The meeting was opened by the Prime Minister of Japan (Mr. Tanaka). The full text of the Prime Minister's speech is annexed to this document.

The Director-General, reporting on the work of the Preparatory Committee, said that the Committee had drawn up two documents. The first of these was the report of the Preparatory Committee. This document, supplemented by the reports of several permanent GATT Committees, provided a detailed picture of the state of the preparatory work.

The second document was the Draft Declaration, which the Preparatory Committee submitted for consideration. It was relatively short, consisting of only eleven paragraphs. Adopted by this meeting, it would declare the negotiations open; lay down the objectives of the negotiations, and the principles on which they would be based, including the principles and objectives of the negotiations with regard to developing countries. It also gave certain directives to the negotiators; set up a Trade Negotiations Committee to supervise the progress of the negotiations; and indicated a date for their conclusion.

Two paragraphs still needed to be drafted in final form. It was hoped that it would prove possible to find an acceptable compromise on the two points concerned.

No delegation would find in the Draft Declaration everything it was looking for. This was in the nature of things since the Declaration had to be acceptable to all participants. Nor could the Declaration be expected to solve the problems which were to be the subject of the negotiations themselves.

The Declaration had to be an acceptable basis from which to launch the negotiations.

It was in this spirit that the Director-General as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee recommended the Draft Declaration for approval.

The Chairman invited comments on the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. The full texts of statements made during the period of the meeting, some of which were made on behalf of a number of countries, will be issued in a series of addenda to this document.

Declaration of Ministers (MIN(73)1)

At the conclusion of the discussions, and in the light of observations made, the Chairman drew attention to the final text of the Declaration which had been circulated. He noted the great measure of support for the Declaration which had been expressed by delegations in the course of their statements and that many representatives had stated that their governments had already decided to participate in the negotiations.

The Declaration was expressed in broad terms and therefore opened the way for advancing further work along lines expressed by delegations. It of course also allowed delegations to pursue specific points, from their own perspective, in the course of the work of the Trade Negotiations Committee. All the statements made would be duly recorded and would constitute a part of the official record of the meeting so that, in view of the work of the Trade Negotiations Committee, note could be taken of the particular positions expressed.

Having this in mind, it was the Chairman's conclusion that the Declaration was approved by the meeting of Ministers. Therefore, it had been decided to enter into comprehensive multilateral negotiations in the framework of GATT.

On the basis of consultations that had been held with delegations on the subject, the TNC, which had been established, would commence on 24 October 1973, and it was the intention of governments to conclude the negotiations by the end of 1975.

There had been discussions regarding appropriate arrangements for the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to follow the developments in the multilateral trade negotiations. It had been agreed that the Director-General of GATT, on a continuing basis, would keep the Secretary-General informed on developments in the multilateral trade negotiations in such a manner as to facilitate the Secretary-General of UNCTAD assisting the developing countries.

The Trade Negotiations Committee could decide to invite the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to attend its meetings, as appropriate.

The Chairman congratulated the Ministers on the success of the meeting in fulfilling its historic rôle of formally launching a new round of multilateral trade negotiations.

The successful conclusion of the meeting, thanks to the co-operation of many people, was a matter of satisfaction also to the host country. This sense of co-operation might perhaps be called the spirit of Tokyo and he hoped that, based on this spirit, a satisfactory conclusion to the new round of multilateral trade negotiations could be arrived at and thus achieve the original purpose: the development of the world economy as a whole.

The full text of the concluding statement by the Chairman has been distributed in document MIN(73)2.

ANNEX

Opening Address
by the Prime Minister Kakuei TANAKA

On this the occasion of the opening of the GATT Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo, it is a great pleasure for me to welcome this very impressive gathering of distinguished policymakers from all over the world.

Fourteen years ago, Japan had the honour to host a meeting of the GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES in Tokyo. I recall that the meeting was for Japan an event marking its new start as a member of the international economic community through Japan's admission to GATT just prior to that meeting. Today, welcoming another major meeting of the GATT to Tokyo, I would like to express my earnest hope that it will be an event launching a new and bold initiative for world prosperity and peace through multilateral expansion of world trade. I also should like to express our heartfelt desire that this meeting should formally declare open a new round of multilateral trade negotiations, and affirm the political will to guide these negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Japan has for some years been advocating the early holding of a new round of multilateral trade negotiations, and for its part, has adopted and pursued an open economic policy. Since I assumed my present post of Prime Minister in July last year, I have myself worked to push forward a series of measures designed to further open up and liberalize the Japanese economy. These measures were supported by a national consensus on the need for Japan to play an international rôle of responsibility and to make an appropriate contribution, with a view to curbing protectionist trends and to realizing a steady expansion of the world economy. I therefore wish to emphasize here that Japan will continue to pursue a forward-looking and open external economic policy. The pursuit of such an open policy is also in line with the requirements of Japan's major internal economic policy objectives: the improvement of the quality of life, stabilization of prices, sophistication of our industrial structure and the overall and comprehensive national development. Thus, Japan will continue to contribute positively to the expansion of world trade by providing an expanding market and constituting an economy which is open to the world. For this purpose, we must seek to maintain a flexible economic structure which will be able to meet this need for international co-operation without rigidly clinging to the industrial structure or systems that were built in the past.

Since the establishment of GATT almost a quarter of a century ago, world trade has recorded an unprecedented expansion and development. In seeking to make possible a further development and expansion of the world economy, however, we must realize that we are confronted by several major challenges. Today, world economic problems are not confined to trade alone, but extend over a vast area and are related to such diverse issues as international monetary problems, investment, inflation, resources and energy, food, conservation of the environment and co-operation in the field of economic development. These challenges are, I am sure, the common concern of all the countries represented here today. We shall never see these problems solved if we are the prisoners of self-centred attitudes. All countries should seek to achieve more broadly based co-operation founded upon a new sense of solidarity.

I therefore firmly believe that the fundamental objective of the new round of multilateral trade negotiations which we are to launch, will be to secure a framework of international trade which can sustain peace and prosperity for all the peoples of the world. This will be realized through the expansion of world trade in a free and open world economy, and, this is fundamentally what GATT seeks to accomplish. The improvement of living standards and welfare which result from the development of world trade must be shared by all peoples of the world. In this sense, we must cope with possible protectionism or inward-looking preferential regionalism that would cast a dark shadow on the development of world trade, and to do so we should seek realistic solutions through multilateral discussions within the framework of GATT.

Today, the wealth and the prosperity of the peoples of the world are founded on economies which are inseparably interdependent. Fully conscious of this fact, we should all mobilize our strength, combine our knowledge and wisdom, and maintain dialogues designed to achieve mutual understanding, in the name of the basic ideals embodied in the General Agreement. This would be the most effective means of achieving our common objectives. In such an atmosphere, GATT can and will continue to function as a living mechanism and provide the impetus for further development of world trade.

Another major important task in the new round of multilateral trade negotiations is the problem of the development of the trade of the developing countries. What benefits will accrue to developing countries from the future development of world economy, and how they will accrue, is a question that requires special attention. In this context, I fully subscribe to the proposed major objective of the new round, namely, "the securing of additional benefits for developing countries". At the same time, together with the co-operation with the developing countries for their trade expansion in the new round, the developed countries would need to extend effective assistance for economic

development that is in keeping with the real needs and situations in the recipient countries. I say this because the prosperity and the stability of the developing countries are the essential prerequisite for the world peace.

The major significance of this Ministerial Conference lies in that the representatives gathered here today, through the exercise of their statesmanship, will reaffirm our shared ideals and principles, and, launch us on a course of action which will make those ideals a reality. Further, it is essential for us to unite our strong political determination for the expansion of trade in a free and open world economy. I have no doubt that in many cases, countries will have conflicting interests. It will not be an easy undertaking to reconcile such interests, to solve the complex and diverse problems which we are to cover in the new round, and to achieve concrete results in our negotiations. Japan, for its part, will participate positively in the new round; while we shall seek the dismantling of trade barriers in all countries, we ourselves will vigorously do what will be required of us. I take this opportunity to state our firm determination to make a constructive and co-operative contribution to the success of the new round. I am confident that all the representatives gathered here today, particularly the representatives of those countries which have most actively worked for the holding of the new round, will participate in the same spirit. I would like to reiterate the hope that at this Ministerial Conference the historic significance of the new round of multilateral trade negotiations will be recognized, and that the political determination that is essential for carrying through the new round will be re-affirmed, so that this enterprise fraught with difficulties may be accomplished by the end of 1975.

Let us unite our efforts, and work together to build a better tomorrow. Our unremitting efforts and our union of political determination will be essential if we are to maintain a vital international economy which can sustain a world at peace and enjoying prosperity and stability.

Let me conclude by wishing you every success at this conference and in the new round of negotiations.