

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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Trade Negotiations Committee

INITIAL STAGES OF THE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

In GATT/AIR/343 I put forward a number of proposals about the work programme for the Trade Negotiations Committee and its subsidiary bodies in the coming months.

I suggest that at its meeting on 19 September the Trade Negotiations Committee should give some thought also to how the negotiations are likely to develop in their initial stages, in particular in the month or two following their opening on 4 May 1964.

In the first place there will presumably be a meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee at that date at the appropriate level, which might be that of Ministers, in order to mark the formal opening of the negotiating conference. It would not seem that more than one or two days would be necessary for this meeting.

4 May 1964 will presumably also - and this will be its more substantive significance - be the deadline for the submission by participating governments of lists of exceptions and - depending on the outcome of discussions in the Agriculture Committee - for the tabling of offers by importing countries on products for which it has been agreed special rules are required (see paragraph 6(iv) of GATT/AIR/343).

Participating governments would then presumably need a short recess of two or three weeks in which to consider these lists before commencing negotiations in relation to them. In the case of the exceptions list, the negotiations would be in two stages. The first would take the form of the justification and confrontation envisaged in paragraph A-4 of the Decision of Ministers of 1963. Thereafter negotiations would take place between delegations aiming at the attainment of a general balance of advantages between the negotiating countries.

If this analysis is correct, then the conclusion would seem to be that the presence of full negotiating teams in Geneva will probably only be needed at the end of May or the beginning of June. Some understanding on the procedure to be followed in the negotiations is necessary before firm arrangements can be made for the conference and office space. I hope, therefore, that the Committee at its next meeting will consider this matter and give the necessary guidance.

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