

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

CONFIDENTIAL

TN.64/Me/1
5 July 1963

Group on Meat

NOTE ON THE MEETING HELD 1-5 JULY 1963

1. At their meeting in May 1963 the Ministers decided that comprehensive trade negotiations, covering agricultural products, should take place in 1964. The Ministers gave directions for the elaboration of the rules to govern and the methods to be employed in the creation of acceptable conditions of access to world markets for agricultural products in furtherance of a significant development and expansion of world trade in such products. The Ministers considered that for meat general arrangements might be required and they entrusted to the Group on Meat the task of negotiating appropriate arrangements. The Ministers requested that the Group should convene at an early date.
2. The Group met in Geneva from 1 to 5 July 1963 under the Chairmanship of Mr. E. Wyndham White, Executive Secretary. The Group had before it documents submitted by Argentina (Spec(63)206), Australia (Spec(63)197), New Zealand (Spec(63)203) and the United Kingdom (Spec(63)190) as well as a paper submitted by the secretariat (Spec(63)208/Rev.1). During the discussion, these delegations, and other members of the Group, outlined their positions on various matters.
3. With respect to the European Economic Community, the following communication had been received by the Executive Secretary from the Community:

"As regards the Group on Meat, it is clear, as the other members of the Group recognize, that in the absence of established common policy rules on this product, the Community cannot in any case participate in pre-negotiations of any form. It is, however, prepared to co-operate to the fullest possible extent in the preparatory work which the Group must necessarily undertake in order to be able to achieve the objectives of Section B, paragraph 3(d) of the ministerial resolution."
4. The representative of the Community stated that the fact that the Community was unable to express any position in the discussion of the various views put forward at the present meeting of the Group, did not prejudice the Community's position in this connexion.
5. The term "the Group" in this note should therefore be interpreted in the light of this statement.

6. The Group agreed that its discussion would concentrate on meats of cattle and sheep, it being understood that live animals and other types of meat would be borne in mind and might, as appropriate, be brought into discussion at a later stage. The Group discussed questions relating to agricultural policies (including both internal measures and measures at the frontier) and to international trade (including access and international prices). A number of other matters were also brought to the Group's attention.

7. It was pointed out in the course of the discussion that the volume of meat entering into international trade was only small in relation to meat production of the large importing countries and that, even taking into account possible increases in consumption, a relatively small increase in production in the large importing countries could have a disproportionately large adverse effect on international trade upon which a number of countries are highly dependent.

8. Exporting countries considered that for the Group to carry out the directive contained in the resolution adopted at the GATT ministerial meeting of 6 May 1963, it was essential that importing countries should be prepared subsequently to negotiate obligations with regard to their internal measures of government assistance to production and tariff or non-tariff measures applied at the frontier, such obligations being directed to maintaining and expanding the import market for meat in these countries. Internal prices in import markets should be consistent with this objective in relation to their effect on production and consumption. The negotiations in the Meat Group should lead to appropriate arrangements to mitigate fluctuations in international prices and to levels of international prices that were remunerative to efficient producers.

9. A number of exporting countries expressed readiness, in the light of the total arrangements that might be negotiable, to consider obligations deriving therefrom, for example obligations to make every endeavour to avoid disruption of import markets.

10. Some importing countries indicated that they were prepared in the light of the total arrangements to negotiate in respect of measures at the frontier affecting imports of meat and where they applied measures of government assistance to domestic production to negotiate regarding such internal measures.

11. The United Kingdom informed the Group that it expected to seek early agreements of an interim character with its suppliers covering both home produced and imported supplies, so as to safeguard the stability of its market pending the completion of the aforesaid negotiations.

12. A number of members of the Group were of the view that because of the limited nature of the discussion at this meeting of the Group it would be premature to consider or reach any conclusion about any specific proposals.

Programme of work

13. It was agreed that the aim should be to advance the work of the Group to the stage where early in 1964, substantive negotiations might be begun in accordance with the terms of reference of the Group.

14. Although the EEC did not take part in the substantive discussion, its position was clarified in regard to the programme of work, the EEC representative expressing the hope that the Group would not meet again except to the extent that the Community regulations on meat of the bovine species had been drawn up in final form.

15. Most members of the Group made it clear that they attached great importance to the next meeting of the Group being held in the autumn and it was essential for the successful prosecution of the work of the Group that all members should then be in a position to discuss the relevant questions of substance.

16. It was agreed that the actual date of the next meeting should be determined by the Chairman in consultation with the members of the Group but that the aim should be as mentioned above, for the next meeting to take place in the coming autumn.