

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

TN(LDC)32
14 July 1970

Special Distribution

Trade Negotiations Committee of Developing Countries

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

Held at the Villa Le Bocage, Geneva, on Wednesday,
17 June 1970, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. O. Long

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Subjects discussed:</u> I. Submission of request lists and offers	1
II. Future work programme	5

1. At the outset of the meeting the Chairman informed the Committee that the Government of Cameroon had expressed the desire to become a member of the Trade Negotiations Committee. The decision of the Government of Cameroon was welcomed by the Committee.

I. Submission of request lists and offers

2. The Chairman recalled that at the seventh meeting of the Committee, held during the twenty-sixth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, a broad consensus had been reached on certain working rules for the negotiations on the basis of which requests and offers for concessions might be formulated and discussed. At that meeting, the Chairman had suggested certain target dates for the filing of requests and offers and participants had agreed to make their best endeavours to meet those dates, namely, 2 April and 1 June for the submission of requests and offers respectively.

3. In outlining developments since the last meeting of the Committee, the Chairman said that document TN(LDC)28 contained information concerning lists of requests presented by participating countries until the end of April 1970. Since then additional request lists of the Philippines and a general request list of Brazil had been circulated, while request lists addressed by Argentina to twelve other participants would be circulated shortly. A total of 196 request lists had thus been presented by sixteen countries. Mexico had presented to six other participants lists of products on which it would be willing to make offers. While it was a matter of satisfaction that further progress had been made in the submission of requests, it was essential that steps should now be taken to accelerate the negotiations. With that objective in mind he had put forward in document TN(LDC)29 certain proposals for the consideration of participating countries. In particular, agreement would have to be reached on the deadline for the filing of provisional offers to serve as a basis for the start of substantive negotiations and on a time-table for intensive consultations, both bilateral and multilateral, which would undoubtedly be required for elaborating and finalizing the offers.

4. Responding to the Chairman's suggestions and his request that the Committee be informed of any further progress in the negotiations that delegations might be in a position to report, the representative of India stated that his delegation had recently held bilateral consultations with a number of participating countries. While these consultations had primarily been aimed at exchanging trade information, his delegation had also been able to indicate to three of the participating countries those items of interest to them on which it might be possible for India to offer concessions. This indication had been given in the expectation that the participating countries concerned would soon be in a position to inform India of the offers they might be able to make in respect to concessions requested from them by India. As soon as these indications were received India would present formal offers. In expressing his delegation's support of the proposals contained in TN(LDC)29, he expressed the hope that the experts, designated by governments for the next phase of the negotiations envisaged to start this autumn, would be given the necessary authority to actually negotiate concessions to a point where governments, after reviewing the proposed exchange of concessions, could bring the whole operation to a successful conclusion so that the results could be presented to the next session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

5. The representative of Pakistan agreed that a determined effort should be made to accelerate the pace of the negotiations. Even if it turned out that the immediate results achieved by the participating countries were not spectacular, the negotiations should provide a foundation for a continuing exchange of concessions among developing countries. Commenting on the modalities of the negotiations he explained that while in the request lists submitted by Pakistan the nature and depth of the requested concessions had generally been indicated, most of the requests submitted by the other participants did not contain such details. While this did not prevent his authorities from giving consideration to the request lists they had received, and it was his hope that they would soon be in a position to present offers in the near future, it would certainly help matters if the secretariat could perhaps provide an indication of the form which offers might usefully take and also as regards the type of non-tariff barriers which could be made subject to offers and concessions.

6. The representative of Israel said that the proposal to organize an intensive phase of bilateral and multilateral consultations at expert level as from mid-October had been communicated to headquarters and it was her hope that they would soon be able to notify acceptance of the proposal. Commenting on the procedures for the exchange of offers she enquired whether it should not be left to each participant to decide to present offers in the initial stage either bilaterally or multilaterally. Alternatively some countries might wish to circulate among all participants lists of products on which they were prepared in principle to consider the grant of concessions while the actual nature of the concessions would be specified, to begin with, in bilateral contacts. At a later stage all negotiating countries would of course have to be informed since in any case the concessions negotiated would be extended to all participants.

7. Mr. M.G. Mathur, Assistant Director-General, in reply to the statement by the representative of Pakistan, recalled that in the course of past discussions in the Committee it had been agreed that it would be open to participating countries to seek concessions not only on tariffs but also on non-tariff barriers. In the list of offers presented by a country it would be open to that country to consider any request for a concession which had been made to it and to decide, in the light of that request, what particular aspect of its non-tariff policy could be made a subject of concession. The nature of request and response might tend to vary from country to country in accordance with the import régime applied in that country. He added that the secretariat was in the process of compiling detailed information on both the tariff and non-tariff measures applied by the different participating countries, and would of course be ready to assist participants in examining what opportunities for an exchange of concession might exist in a given instance.

8. In response to the queries raised by the representative of Israel, Mr. Mathur explained that in past GATT negotiations it had been the practice to set a date for the submission of offers. A country could receive copies of other offers made in the negotiations when it had made offers of its own. It was of course open in special circumstances for countries to indicate that copies of their offers be withheld from certain participants. In the present negotiations one could allow a certain flexibility in the initial circulation of offers so as to limit it, where desired, to certain designated countries. At an appropriate time, it would, however, be advantageous if, subject to any special conditions or limitation that might be set by a particular country, all countries which had presented offers should receive copies of the offers made by other participants. It was only through such a procedure that each participant would be able to evaluate, not only the direct benefits to it from the negotiations, but also the indirect benefits which would accrue to it from concessions offered by other countries. These indirect benefits formed an important part in the balance of benefits and obligations to result from the negotiations. It was evident that the more specific and concrete the offers were, the better it would be for the purpose of making headway in the negotiations. However, where a country felt that the presentation of a list of products on which it was willing to consider making concessions without details regarding the nature of the concessions, would enable it to secure the additional consultation or information needed by it to define the nature of the concessions it might offer, it should not be discouraged from submitting such a list.

9. The representative of India suggested that it might be left to participants to decide at what stage they would wish to share informally with other participants indications of possible offers they might be able to make and thereafter in the light of indications received during such informal exchanges to formulate their offers. To this end it might perhaps be appropriate if participating countries were to select items from those listed in INT(70)104 on which concessions could be granted and to inform the requesting countries accordingly. This would permit substantive negotiations to get rapidly under way.

10. The representative of Mexico expressed satisfaction at the broad coverage of the negotiations. He stressed the need for a firm decision on the part of participating countries to give a new impetus to the negotiations. He agreed that negotiations, both bilateral and multilateral, at expert level for eight to ten weeks starting in October would be most helpful with a view to an early conclusion of the negotiations and to permit the presentation of the results to the CONTRACTING PARTIES early next year.

11. The representative of Yugoslavia said that his Government had addressed requests to fifteen participating countries. So far, however, only eight of these countries had reciprocated. It was the intention of his Government to present offers to all the fifteen countries as soon as requests from all of them had been received. The bilateral consultations which his delegation had had with a number of participants had not been as fruitful as might have been hoped for as most of them were reluctant to engage in the consultations until such time as participation by a greater number of developing countries was assured. He supported the proposal of consultations at expert level envisaged for mid-October but in the view of his delegation these consultations would be successful only if experts were present from a greater number of the participating countries.

12. The representative of the United Arab Republic said that the requests addressed to his Government were being presently studied in Cairo, and it was his hope that it would be possible for his Government to present offers in the very near future. He concurred in the general view that consultations at expert level commencing in mid-October would be useful.

13. The representative of Brazil said that he had transmitted the proposals in TN(LDC)29 to his Government. Although he had not received any instructions, the period of mid-October suggested for bilateral and multilateral negotiations assisted by experts from headquarters with a view to achieving some positive results by the end of the year, seemed appropriate.

14. The representative of Turkey concurred in the proposal that intensive bilateral and multilateral negotiations be carried out at expert level for eight to ten weeks commencing mid-October. He stated that his Government was in the process of preparing offer lists and it was his hope that these could be submitted at an early date.

15. The representative of Ceylon said that he had forwarded the proposals contained in TN(LDC)29 to his Government but had not received an indication so far whether experts could be sent to Geneva in October for the envisaged phase of bilateral and multilateral negotiations. He also informed the Committee that his Government had addressed request lists to twelve participating countries, and also provided relevant information on Ceylon's external trade and import régimes. His delegation had already held informal consultations with several other participants. These consultations would certainly be of assistance when work at the expert level started in the autumn. He expressed his agreement with the point

made earlier during the discussion that offers made in the negotiations should, in principle, be circulated to all members of the Trade Negotiations Committee so that each participant would know what was being offered by the others.

II. Future work programme

16. In his summing up, the Chairman pointed out that already participants had exchanged request lists covering more than 9,600 tariff positions and that a great deal of preparatory work had been accomplished so that there appeared to be enough of a base to start substantive negotiations. Moreover it was more than likely that as negotiations got under way other developing countries might find it possible to join. He noted a broad measure of agreement that a determined effort should be made to bring the exercise, or at least the major part of it, to a successful conclusion by the end of the year. Having this target date in mind it would be necessary that the preliminary examination of the request lists at headquarters should be expedited and at least provisional offers should be presented by each participant not later than 1 September 1970, to serve as a basis for bilateral and multilateral consultations and negotiations at expert level to start in mid-October. It also meant that for the period of the substantive consultations and negotiations the permanent missions should be reinforced by experts from headquarters to enable each country to elaborate its own offers and evaluate those made by the other participating countries and thereafter to finalize the concessions to be exchanged.

17. The Committee agreed to the time-table suggested by the Chairman for its future work, including the target dates of 1 September for the presentation of offers, and mid-October for the commencement of consultations and negotiations attended by technical experts from headquarters.

18. The Chairman informed members of the Committee that the secretariat was in the process of compiling data on import regimes and the pattern of trade for the whole range of tariff positions and BTM items on which concessions had been requested. It was hoped that these data would soon be made available to participating countries.