

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES HELD ON 31 JANUARY 1966

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. Another in a series of regular meetings of the informal group of less-developed countries was held on 31 January 1966 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. C. Valenzuela, Ambassador of Chile.
2. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Pakistan, Peru, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, the United Arab Republic, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.
3. The group discussed the approach which less-developed countries might adopt in the meeting of the Group on Expansion of Trade Among Less-Developed Countries with a view to arriving at some concrete recommendations which could be submitted to the Committee on Trade and Development. In this connexion, it was recalled that at its earlier meeting, the Group on Expansion of Trade had a preliminary exchange of views on the proposals submitted by the United Arab Republic and the United States for the exchange of preferences between less-developed countries. A number of points and questions had arisen during the discussion of the two proposals which need to be looked into at the present meeting of the Group on Expansion of Trade.¹
4. With regard to the question how matters should be conducted in the meeting of the Group on Expansion of Trade, the group agreed that it would be advisable if, in the early stages of the meeting, the representatives of the United Arab Republic and the United States were given an opportunity to express their views on respective proposals, if they so wished. Thereafter, discussion should be concentrated on the specific questions set out in paragraphs 29-32 of document COM.TD/D/2, followed by any other concrete proposals or suggestions that any members might wish to be considered by the Group.

¹See document COM.TD/D/2, paragraphs 29-32.

5. One member of the group stated that, from the discussions which had taken place earlier on the issue, it had become apparent that the principle of granting preferences by less-developed countries to each other had been accepted as one of the means to promote their economic development. The debate on the question of the principle concerning the exchange of preferences between less-developed countries should not, therefore, be re-opened in the meeting of the Group on the Expansion of Trade. An effort should be made by less-developed countries to keep the discussion limited to the modality and modus operandi of such preferences.

6. The question which had remained undetermined was whether such preferences should be granted on an intra-regional or universal basis. After a short discussion on the nature of such preferences the group agreed that less-developed countries should support the United Arab Republic proposal which was broader in approach than the United States proposal. The representative of the United Arab Republic, while speaking in favour of his Government's proposal, should also indicate that action for the implementation of the envisaged preferences would be taken in the context of Part IV of the General Agreement.

7. Reference was made to document COM.TD/D/W/3, prepared by the secretariat, on trade among developing countries. It was stated that inclusion of trade figures pertaining to non-alcoholic beverages, tropical beverages and a more detailed break-down of data relating to trade in fuels would help to depict a more accurate picture of the trade exchanges between developing countries.¹

¹See document COM.TD/D/W/3, paragraphs 20, 23 and 29-31.