

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Revised
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Special Distribution

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

TASKS WHICH GROUP 3(e) IS TO CARRY OUT IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER GROUPS

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

1. The present note updates document MTN/3E/W/15 with respect to meetings of Groups 3(a) and 3(b) held during the week beginning 1 July 1974.

GROUP 3(a)

The meeting that Group 3(a) held during the week beginning 1 July considered in particular two points on which Group 3(c) should be informed.

A. In the context of the first item of the programme of work of Group 3(a), that is bringing up to date and completing the analytical and statistical documentation, the secretariat was instructed to proceed with the tabulation and subsequent circulation of a document along the lines described in paragraphs 6 and 7 of COM.IND/W/111, concerning the Generalized System of Preferences and most-favoured-nation reductions.

It was agreed that the secretariat should take account of specific suggestions by interested delegations for refining and elaborating the product groups mentioned in the addendum to this document.

The Group agreed to add to the tabulations information indicating trade taking place under regional arrangements.

It was furthermore agreed that this tabulation would not be limited to those countries which were already operating generalized preference schemes, but would include all countries participating in the Tariff Study.

Since it was proposed that these tabulations would cover also products classified in BTN Chapters 1-24, Group 3(a) agreed that Group 3(c) should be informed of the result of the discussions on this matter.

B. The Group agreed to a proposal to establish a tariff rate information file on the basis of submissions by governments of detailed information on their various tariff rates on selected dates, such as GATT rates, most-favoured-nation rates applied to GATT countries in the absence of other legislation e.g. temporary duty changes, most-favoured-nation rates actually assessed from GATT countries and effectively applied rates under the GSP. This tariff information should be accompanied by an explanatory note describing the country's tariff system with a view to differentiating and explaining the differences in the various categories of rates recorded.

The Group agreed that information on tariff rates should be given for 1 January or 1 April 1972, 1 January 1973 and 1 January 1974, on the understanding that countries which would have special problems with the figures for any particular year would indicate this in their submissions. A proposal was made that the file would be updated at regular intervals. Some delegations said that they could not associate themselves with this proposal. It was agreed that this question would be reverted to at a later stage.

Group 3(a) agreed to inform Group 3(e) of its decision to establish the tariff rate information file.

GROUP 3(b)

The relevant sections of the report of Group 3(b) to the TNC, adopted during the week beginning 1 July 1974, are as follows:

A. Task 10: Continuation of the study of a possible code regarding countervailing duties (General Aspects)

The report of Group 3(b) to the TNC deals with the possible solutions to the problem of countervailing duties and with the question of differentiated treatment in the field of subsidies and countervailing duties for developing countries.

B. Task 12: Beginning of the work relating to packaging and labelling (General Aspects)

The report of Group 3(b) to the TNC, deals with the clarification of problems, with the work of other organizations and with the approach to be adopted. In this latter regard the report notes inter alia, that:

"There was a wide measure of agreement in the Group that packaging and labelling requirements should be harmonized internationally, that the appropriate international organizations should be used for this purpose, and that the GATT should do what it could to support this work ..."

"Many delegations said that the proposed GATT instrument for preventing technical barriers to trade (the draft code COM.IND/W/108 and Corr.1) already contained provisions to deal with most of the issues raised ..."

"It was questioned, however, whether the Code dealt with every problem in this field, and it was suggested that delegations which considered that certain problems were not covered should give details of these."

C. Task 14: Continuation of the study relating to import documentation
Chapters 1-99)

The position with regard to the work by the Group 3(b) on import documentation is summarized in the following paragraph of its report to the TNC:

"There was consensus in the Group that an essential goal under this task was the simplification and harmonization of import documents and the data required for customs clearance purposes. Possible approaches were suggested; one would be the establishment of guidelines or sets of principles; another one would be the encouragement of accelerated work on documentation in other international organizations such as the CCC and the ECE and a third one the holding of bilateral negotiations on particular measures existing in this field. It was pointed out that these approaches were not mutually exclusive and might be combined."