

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/SG/W/6

10 October 1975

Special Distribution

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

Group "Safeguards"

INTERNATIONAL SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

Feasibility Study by the Secretariat

1. At its meeting of June-July 1975, the Group "Safeguards" requested the secretariat "to examine the feasibility of drawing up a survey of the most important surveillance systems used in the commercial policy field in different international bodies" (MTN/SG/2, paragraph 8). During the discussion of this proposal it was suggested that the survey should describe the constitution and nature of the international bodies concerned.
2. The term "surveillance systems" can be interpreted in different ways. If it were requested to do such a survey, the secretariat would assume that such systems are designed to monitor developments in the trade field with a view to verifying whether specific international obligations were being observed and signalling instances in which doubt exists on this score, or with a view to indicating whether a situation has arisen in which corrective action may be necessary if agreed objectives are to be attained. Such systems would also frequently be empowered to make recommendations or decisions in such instances.
3. If this approach were acceptable, the secretariat would be in a position to describe the workings of relevant GATT bodies, i.e. the Textiles Surveillance Body; the Balance-of-Payments Committee; the Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices; the Management Committees established by the Arrangement Concerning Certain Dairy Products and by the Protocol Relating to Milk Fat; and the Meat Consultative Group.
4. The secretariat could also, provided the assistance of the organizations concerned were forthcoming, describe workings of the Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal established by the FAO's Committee on Commodity Problems; the Advisory Sub-Committee on Market Conditions, the Executive Committee and Food Aid Committee established by the International Wheat Agreement; the use of advisory panels in the International Sugar Agreement, in the International Cocoa Agreement, in the International Coffee Agreement; and the surveillance functions of the Council of the International Tin Agreement.
5. The secretariat would welcome further suggestions of surveillance systems operating in the commercial policy field which might be dealt with if a paper is to be prepared on this subject.