

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/TP/W/6/Add.1

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Special Distribution

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

Group "Tropical Products"

CIRCULATION OF INITIAL OFFERS

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

1. In the light of enquiries by certain delegations, the secretariat has attempted, in the following paragraphs, to elaborate on some of the information contained in document MTN/TP/W/6 entitled "Circulation of Initial Offers" which basically describes the procedures followed in earlier GATT rounds of trade negotiations.

Circulation of offers

2. Paragraphs 11 and 12 of MTN/TP/W/6 provide an indication in broad terms of how the negotiations on tropical products were conducted in the course of the Kennedy Round. It is stated therein that "specific and concrete offers were to be made in respect of tropical products ... on the same date as the offers on agricultural products in general". Further research into this matter shows that in this respect the offers were made in the Group on Tropical Products taking into account an indicative list of tropical products prepared by the secretariat to which additions were made by developing country exporters of tropical products.

3. The offers took the form of consolidated lists tabled by the participant concerned to which were attached a cover note containing comments and observations relating to the offer. It had also been agreed in the Group that negotiations based on such offers would start by a process of examination and discussion in the Group on Tropical Products, in the course of which the offering countries would furnish explanations on the content and scope of their offers. This procedure also enabled developing countries to participate in the discussions with respect to items in which they had a trade interest. It is understood that negotiations then proceeded between interested participants with the objective of achieving the maximization of the offers initially tabled. At a later stage, a meeting of countries principally concerned in trade in tropical products was held to review the results of the procedures undertaken. Subsequently, a number of suggestions relating to possible improvements in the offers tabled were made.

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4. In the context of the Kennedy Round, it appears that any developed country which had tabled an offer or any developing country which had notified its readiness to present a statement of the offers it would make as a contribution to the objectives of the negotiations received copies of the offers on tropical products tabled by developed country participants. In this connexion, a reference might also be made to paragraph 57 of MTN/W/8 which describes certain rules and procedures for the Kennedy Round of trade negotiations.

Format

5. Paragraph 6 of MTN/TP/W/6 provides information on the format used for the presentation of offers in negotiations prior to the Kennedy Round. In connexion with negotiations on tropical products in the Kennedy Round, it would appear that a somewhat more flexible approach was adopted towards the format for the tabling of offers in this area. An examination of the offers actually tabled on tropical products shows that, in most cases, the details provided generally covered the tariff item number, product description, existing rates of duty and offer with such other information describing the scope and nature of the offers as might be required.

Confidentiality

6. Arrangements were made in all rounds of negotiations with the objective of ensuring the confidentiality of the offers tabled. In the Kennedy Round, participating countries tabling offers on tropical products provided sufficient copies to the secretariat to enable them to be circulated to other participants in the negotiations. All copies were marked secret and numbered, two copies being personally handed to each participant against a formal receipt.

7. It might also be noted that whereas in the Kennedy Round tariff concessions on tropical products were granted on an m.f.n. basis, it is understood that in the context of the present round of negotiations some of the offers on tropical products will be in the nature of extension or enlargement of existing GSP schemes. The requests for concessions also cover non-tariff measures applying to tropical products.