

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

MTN/NTM/27
24 February 1977
Special Distribution

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

Group "Non-Tariff Measures"
Sub-Group "Customs Matters"

MEETING OF FEBRUARY 1977

Summing-up by the Chairman

1. The Sub-Group met on 21 February 1977. It invited the Secretary-General of UNCTAD or his representative to attend this meeting of the Sub-Group as an observer. It also invited a representative of the Customs Co-operation Council to attend this meeting of the Sub-Group as an observer to assist the Sub-Group in an expert capacity.
2. The Sub-Group noted the communications received from Chairmen of other Groups or Sub-Groups (MTN/NTM/W/83). At the end of the discussion the Chairman, on his own responsibility, gave the following summing-up.
 - A. Customs valuation
3. The Sub-Group heard several statements outlining, inter alia, the need for concrete proposals to be submitted by participants which would give a clearer indication of their negotiating position. In this context one delegation reported that it was pursuing its bilateral contacts with other delegations in order to ascertain clearly their position and in order to explore the possibility of reaching agreement on valuation rules which might receive international acceptance. This delegation said that it would take appropriate initiatives if as a result of these contacts it appeared that there was some possibility of reaching such an agreement.
4. The Sub-Group had a preliminary discussion of issues related to rules on customs valuation on the basis of communications received from delegations and reproduced in MTN/NTM/W/65 and addenda, and agreed to continue this discussion at its next meeting.
5. The Sub-Group invited participants who wished to add any comments or additional items to the lists to do so in time for the next meeting. The secretariat will circulate these communications on the understanding that they will not be binding on any delegation and that all comments reflect only preliminary views on possible elements that may be included in any new set of international rules on customs valuation which might be agreed upon in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations.

B. Import documentation, consular formalities and fees, and customs procedures

6. The Sub-Group decided to adopt the procedures set out in the Annex which are aimed to facilitate the work of the Sub-Group by providing a framework to find a solution to specific customs problems. Several delegations from developing countries, while accepting the proposal, reiterated the view that customs formalities and fees still maintained by their countries did not constitute obstacles to trade and could not be subject to negotiations.

7. One delegation announced that its authorities had brought recent changes to Customs Form 5515. These changes and the new form would be communicated to the secretariat shortly for circulation to the members of the Sub-Group.

Date of the next meeting

8. The Sub-Group agreed to hold its next meeting in July 1977 the precise date to be fixed by Group "Non-Tariff Measures" at its forthcoming meeting.

ANNEX

Objective

To facilitate the work of the Sub-Group by providing a framework for finding solutions to specific customs problems.

Subject matter

This procedure would cover those issues mandated to the Customs Matters Sub-Group and including, in particular, customs procedures, import documentation and consular formalities and fees.

Procedures

1. Delegations would prepare notifications of specific customs problems that they have encountered and then submit them via the secretariat to those countries maintaining these practices.
2. The secretariat would circulate these notifications to MTN participants.
3. If interested delegations feel it appropriate, consultations would be arranged on a bilateral or plurilateral basis to discuss the notifications, determine their accuracy, and explore possible solutions to the problems raised in the notifications. Assistance from the secretariat would be available on request.
4. After the consultations have taken place delegations should endeavour to send to the secretariat summary notes with respect to the consultations in which they had participated as exporting or importing countries; the secretariat would assemble and distribute these summaries in the appropriate NTM document series to facilitate the further work of the Sub-Group.
5. On the basis of such summary notes and any further oral comments, the Customs Matters Sub-Group would review the results of these consultations with a view to determining the next step in this aspect of the negotiation. Such determination should include the possibility of multilateral solutions to these problems.