

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/AG/2
15 July 1975

Special Distribution

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

Group "Agriculture"

SUMMING-UP BY THE CHAIRMAN

The following summing-up by the Chairman of Group "Agriculture" was approved by the Group at its meeting on 14 July 1975:

1. The Group met on 9, 10 and 14 July 1975 and took the following actions. The Group invited the Secretary-General of UNCTAD or his representative to attend this session of the Group as an observer.
2. The Group took note of the work done in the Sub-Groups on Grains, Meat and Dairy Products, and decided that work in these Sub-Groups should be actively and intensively pursued, the dates of meetings to be decided by each Sub-Group.
3. Recalling that the Sub-Groups were themselves organizing their work, the Group noted the need for the work in the three Sub-Groups to move forward in parallel as far as possible.
4. Several delegations raised the question of products which were outside the present negotiating procedures in Group "Agriculture" and asked how and when these products might also be negotiated. The Group heard proposals for the establishment of further sub-groups for certain products including the products referred to in paragraph 9 of MTN/5. While reaffirming its earlier decision that further sub-groups might be added, the Group considered that it was not desirable to set up such sub-groups at the present time. The Group recognized the legitimate interests of delegations in products outside the purview of the present Sub-Groups.
5. The Group noted the reiteration by some developing countries that in its work it would bear in mind that certain products fell within the purview of the Group "Tropical Products", and in this connexion it noted paragraph 1(viii) of the Guidelines for Organization of Negotiations on Tropical Products (MTN/TP/1).
6. The Group discussed questions relating to the procedures to be followed in respect of quantitative restrictions on agricultural products, as well as in respect of other tariff or non-tariff measures on products not covered by the three Sub-Groups. Various proposals were put before the Group.

7. The delegation of a developing country made the following proposal:

"(i) The Group agreed, for agricultural products other than those covered by Sub-Groups "Meat", "Grains", "Dairy Products", to make an initial examination of tariff and non-tariff barriers affecting trade in those products in the various markets.

(ii) For determining the agricultural products to be the subject of this initial examination, the Group will take into account lists of products presented to the Group by each interested participant, by means of notifications to the secretariat.

(iii) To assist in this work, the secretariat was requested to prepare an up-to-date list of tariff and non-tariff barriers affecting trade in such products in the various markets."

8. This proposal was supported by a number of delegations of developed and developing countries. Some delegations of developing countries presented initial lists of agricultural products that they wished to be included in this first examination. The Group agreed to revert to the examination of this proposal at its next meeting.

9. The following proposal was made:

"In accordance with paragraph 2 of the Summing-up by the Chairman of Group "Agriculture" (document MTN/AG/1), the Group agreed on the following work programme for the treatment of tariff and non-tariff measures affecting agricultural products other than those already covered by the product sub-groups:

(i) the secretariat was requested to furnish to the members of Group "Agriculture" the list of tariff or non-tariff problems raised in other groups or sub-groups which also affect agricultural products, and a statement of notifications presented by participating countries concerning quantitative restrictions on agricultural products;

(ii) the Group agreed, as an initial step, to undertake a process of information, examination and dialogue with respect to all tariff and non-tariff measures affecting agricultural products. This process would take place through detailed bilateral or plurilateral consultations or discussions. It would be based on the notifications mentioned in sub-paragraph (i) above and on communications which the countries concerned might notify to the secretariat in respect of any tariff or non-tariff measure affecting agricultural products that was of direct interest for their trade.

Following those consultations and discussions, Group "Agriculture" would analyze, as a second step, the situation then obtaining and would engage in discussions on specific suggestions - whether or not of multilateral scope - that might be made by countries having participated in the consultations and discussions, with a view to action on any individual measure.

The result of that work would be communicated to the other Groups, in accordance with paragraph 2 of the Summing-up by the Chairman of Group "Agriculture".

10. There was an inconclusive discussion on this proposal in the course of which certain delegations raised points concerning its conformity with the mandate of Group "Agriculture" as set out in MTN/AG/1. The Group agreed to revert to the examination of the proposal at its next meeting.

11. The delegation of a developing country also made the following proposal:

"As a step towards the implementation of the provisions of the Tokyo Declaration as regards the establishment of special procedures for the negotiations between developed and developing countries, the Group decided that developing countries be invited to present to the developed countries in this Group lists indicating their negotiating interests in the agricultural field both with respect to products and measures, looking towards discussions - bilateral, plurilateral or multilateral - aimed at identifying the possible negotiating interests of the developing countries. To help in this task the secretariat would receive notifications including copies of these lists and would prepare an up-to-date catalogue of tariffs and non-tariff measures faced in developed markets by the products notified by the exporting developing countries. After this stage of information, the developing countries shall decide if in the effective negotiating stage they will submit their requests for concessions in the Group "Agriculture" or in other negotiating groups or sub-groups."

12. This proposal was supported by the delegations of developing countries and by some delegations of developed countries. Some further delegations believed that a decision of this kind would be premature since it concerned a special procedure; this should be established after, or at the same time as, the general procedure. The Group agreed to revert to the examination of this proposal at its next meeting.

13. The view was also expressed that this proposal did not take account of the position of those delegations which had indicated their intention of considering their quantitative restrictions in the Sub-Group "Quantitative Restrictions". Certain delegations reserved the right to utilize the procedure of notification as provided for in the Sub-Group "Quantitative Restrictions". Some other delegations believed that this was not in conformity with paragraph 2 of the Summing-up by the Chairman of Group "Agriculture" (MTN/AG/1).

14. Some delegations believed that the proposals in paragraphs 7, 9 and 11 above were complementary, and might be merged, including the general and special procedures set out therein.

15. With respect to quantitative restrictions, paragraph 2(vi) of the Summing-up of the Chairman of the Sub-Group "Quantitative Restrictions" made on 30 April 1975 (MTN/NTM/2) was brought to the attention of the Group in accordance with the agreement reached in the Group "Non-Tariff Measures" on 25 June 1975 (MTN/NTM/6, paragraph 11). The text of this paragraph reads:

"The negotiations encompass quantitative restrictions on agricultural products. It was noted that agricultural products would be considered in accordance with the summing-up of the Chairman of the Trade Negotiations Committee at its meeting of February 1975. Some delegations indicated their intention to consider quantitative restrictions on agricultural products in this Sub-Group. Some other delegations indicated their intention to consider such quantitative restrictions in the Agriculture Group."

16. Some delegations considered that the fact that the Group "Agriculture" had decided its work programme after the Sub-Group "Quantitative Restrictions" had met was pertinent to the consideration of this point by the Group. Other delegations did not agree that this was a significant aspect. The Group "Agriculture" agreed to take note of this communication in the light of the decisions it took on 8 May 1975.

17. As regards quantitative restrictions, four proposals were tabled:

(a) The proposal was made that in respect of the position of the delegations which had indicated, or might indicate, their intention to consider quantitative restrictions on agricultural products in Group "Agriculture", the Group should adopt, *mutatis mutandis*, the procedures agreed upon in the Sub-Group "Quantitative Restrictions", as set forth in paragraph 6(i) to (iv) inclusive, of document MTN/NTM/2.

(b) It was also proposed that in view of the discussions which had taken place in the sub-group on quantitative restrictions, in respect of quantitative restrictions on agricultural products, the Group should agree:

(i) As an initial step towards the working out of solutions, a process of information, examination and dialogue should be undertaken with respect to existing quantitative restrictions on agricultural products, taking into account, inter alia, paragraph 3(e) of the Tokyo Declaration and the work already initiated by the sub-groups on grains, meat and dairy products. This process should elucidate, inter alia, whether restrictions are maintained in accordance with the General Agreement and should also elucidate the economic and social circumstances underlying particular restrictions in importing countries.

(ii) This process of information, examination and dialogue would take place through detailed bilateral or plurilateral consultations or discussions between countries maintaining restrictions and countries notifying a direct trade interest in these restrictions through the secretariat. These consultations or discussions might include specific suggestions for action in regard to individual restrictions. Flexibility should be allowed for developing countries to participate adequately in this process.

(iii) The results of these consultations or discussions would be reported to the next meeting of the Group by the countries involved in each of the consultations or discussions for analysis of the existing situation by the Group.

In this connexion, the Group noted the view of some delegations that it would not be very productive to apply such a process of information, examination and dialogue only to quantitative restrictions.

(c) It was also proposed that the Group agree that there be only one procedure for the treatment of quantitative restrictions for all products, namely, that established by the Sub-Group "Quantitative Restrictions" of the Group "Non-Tariff Measures".

(d) Lastly, it was proposed that the procedures for quantitative restrictions on agricultural products be integrated into the framework of detailed discussions and consultations covering all tariff and non-tariff measures as proposed in paragraph 9.

18. The Group agreed to revert to the examination of the proposals regarding quantitative restrictions at its next meeting.

19. Some delegations invited the attention of the Group to the proposal that had been put forward in the Groups "Tariffs" and "Non-Tariff Measures" that the procedures for dealing with non-tariff measures which related to particular tariff items should be related to and integrated with whatever procedures are agreed upon for tariff negotiations.

20. The suggestion was made that the Group at its next meeting give attention to the problem of sanitary and phytosanitary regulations.

Information to the Trade Negotiations Committee

21. The Group agreed that the Chairman should make an oral report to the Trade Negotiations Committee covering the work of the Group and its Sub-Groups.

Calendar of meetings

22. The Group, noting that its Sub-Groups would themselves set the dates of their meetings, agreed that it might hold its next session in the week beginning 20 October 1975, it being understood that every effort would be made to avoid as far as possible any conflict in timing with the meetings of the Group "Tropical Products", and that the Group might meet again, tentatively in the week beginning 1 December 1975.