

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADEMultilateral Trade Negotiations
Group "Agriculture"

Original: English

PROPOSAL BY THE UNITED STATES

1. For more than a year work has progressed in Group "Agriculture" in accordance with procedural suggestions in MTN/W/24 and guidelines elaborated in MTN/AG/4. The resulting process of notification and consultation has been useful in clarifying the nature and extent of the various measures applied to international trade in agricultural products other than those covered by the product Sub-Groups. During this period a multilateral examination of the factors affecting trade in grains, meat and dairy products has also taken place in the Sub-Groups. This work has been complemented by informal discussions among delegations.
2. The United States has on repeated occasions stated that meaningful progress in the liberalization and expansion of agricultural trade is vital to the successful conclusion of this round of negotiations. The work of the past year has established the basis for achieving this goal. The time is now ripe to move to the negotiating phase by the adoption of a realistic and concrete work programme. In the United States view, such a programme should include both bilateral and multilateral aspects.
3. The United States believes that substantive negotiations can only begin when countries indicate on a product or line-item basis those measures where liberalization or other action by the importing country is desired. The United States proposes therefore that countries submit by 1 November requests on all measures, both tariff and non-tariff.
4. In our view it should be open to all participants in the negotiations to make requests on all items they consider to be agricultural products. This pragmatic procedure would help ensure that the negotiating interests of individual countries with respect to specific measures will be addressed by their trading partners during the MTN. A procedure of this kind may be particularly important with respect to products within the scope of the three Sub-Groups which may not lend themselves to a multilateral arrangement. In the meantime, the three Sub-Groups will continue to deal with those aspects of the commodities of concern to them which lend themselves to multilateral arrangements or agreements.

5. An appropriate period would be provided to allow for analysis of requests and such further consultations as may be required to clarify the nature and extent of the requests. Subsequently, and by 15 January, each participant would submit its offers, in full accordance with the Tokyo Declaration that "the negotiation shall be considered as one undertaking, the various parts of which shall move forward together."

6. At the same time, the United States continues to attach importance to the work of the agricultural Sub-Groups and urges interested countries to submit proposals for the future work of these Groups as soon as possible so that substantive negotiations can begin in the fall.

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The foregoing proposal, which the United States is making in the "Agriculture" Group, will be followed by a similar United States proposal in the Non-Tariff Measures Group relating to non-tariff measures for industrial products. In addition, we look forward to early agreement on a tariff negotiating plan. In the United States view these procedures form an integrated approach to the negotiations, along with negotiations in the commodity Sub-Groups and on multilateral rules for issues such as subsidies and countervailing duties, standards, safeguards, government procurement and customs valuation.