

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON

RESTRICTED

TAR/Spec/6

9 October 1990

TARIFFS AND TRADE

Committee on Tariff Concessions

DRAFT REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON TARIFF CONCESSIONS TO THE COUNCIL

1. Because of the very heavy work programme related to the Uruguay Round negotiations, the Committee on Tariff Concessions held only one meeting this year, i.e. on 9 October 1990, under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. de la Peña (Mexico).
2. The Committee pursued its activities related to the implementation of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (Harmonized System), the submission of the required documentation for Article XXVIII negotiations to be carried out in connection with the introduction of the Harmonized System and the establishment of new HS schedules for their annexation to a protocol. The Committee examined also more specific issues concerning the completion of the various columns in the loose-leaf schedules, in particular column 5 (existing initial negotiating rights), column 6 (date when a concession was first granted) and column 7 (historical INRs).
3. Since the Harmonized System entered into force on 1 January 1988, sixty-four of the ninety-nine contracting parties have adopted the Harmonized System. This represents more than 95 per cent of GATT contracting parties' trade. Several contracting parties have requested a waiver from their obligations under Article II in order to be able to put into force the Harmonized System immediately and conduct the necessary Article XXVIII subsequently. The Committee noted, however, that a few countries had implemented the Harmonized System without following the GATT procedures established to this effect and urged them to submit the required documentation as soon as possible.
4. On 27 September 1990 a new Geneva (1990) Protocol was opened. It is expected that at least two or three countries would terminate their Article XXVIII negotiations in the near future and might be able to annex their new HS schedules to this Protocol by 31 December 1990.
5. Most of the HS schedules annexed to the various protocols constitute certified but incomplete loose-leaf schedules since information in certain columns is missing. Bilateral negotiations are being carried out by the delegations concerned with a view to reaching an agreement on the transposition of initial negotiating rights into the HS loose-leaf

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schedules. At present, only three contracting parties have a complete certified HS schedule. Delegations have agreed to make every effort to terminate their negotiations as early as possible and submit the missing information for certification.

6. The Committee also pursued its efforts towards obtaining approved consolidated pre-HS schedules. Out of the sixty-five contracting parties having a GATT schedule (EEC schedule = 12 member States), forty-five schedules have been circulated according to the requirements of the loose-leaf system, of which twenty-one have already been approved. Several contracting parties have been approached by the secretariat regarding the status of their schedules and the possibility of carrying out renegotiations in order to update their schedules. In this respect, the secretariat has provided technical assistance to some of the delegations concerned.