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GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Consultative Group of Eighteen

Eleventh Meeting

3-4 March 1980

It will be recalled that, at its meeting on 22-23 October 1979, the Consultative Group of Eighteen discussed the future of the Group and came to the conclusion that the GATT should have at its disposal on a continuing basis a small but representative group which would permit existing and emerging trade policy issues to be discussed in confidence among responsible officials from capitals. It consequently decided to recommend to the Council that the Consultative Group of Eighteen be established as a permanent GATT body.

The Council, at its meeting on 22 November 1979, fully supported the Group's recommendation and agreed to the establishment of the Consultative Group of Eighteen as a permanent body of the GATT, with the mandate proposed by the Group. The report of the Council containing this decision was formally adopted by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at their Thirty-Fifth Session on 27 November 1979.

It is expected that the CONTRACTING PARTIES may now wish to make full use of this new permanent body, to facilitate an effective concertation of views and policies in the trade field, particularly in the present difficult juncture in international relations. Given the circumstances, the effectiveness of the Group would appear to very much depend on participation at an appropriate level.

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

It is suggested that at its eleventh meeting the Consultative Group address itself to the following:

1. Structural adjustment and trade policy
2. The trade policy aspects of the North-South Dialogue
3. Other business

Item 1 - Structural adjustment and trade policy

In the GATT Work Programme adopted by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at their Thirty-Fifth Session, the Consultative Group of Eighteen is requested to examine the question of structural adjustment and trade policy further and to advise the Council, and also through it, the Committee on Trade and Development, on the modalities for carrying out further work in this area, taking into account the continuing rôle of the Committee on Trade and Development. The Group may now wish to begin

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its examination of this topic. The secretariat has prepared a conceptual background paper to help the Group organize its discussion (CG.18/W/37).

Item 2 - The trade policy aspects of the North-South Dialogue

The North-South Dialogue is presently being held in many different fora. The Group may wish to explore the contribution the GATT could make in dealing with the trade aspects of the problems discussed in this Dialogue. So as to avoid a duplication of efforts made elsewhere, priority attention would need to be given in the Group's debate to specific trade-related issues rather than to the overall relationship between developed and developing countries. The secretariat has therefore prepared a brief note listing trade issues that are under discussion in other fora so that these may be seen in relation to GATT's own work and area of activity (CG.18/W/38).

Item 3 - Other business