

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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CONTRACTING PARTIES
Ninth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 October 1954, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: H.E. Mr. L. Dana WILGRESS (Canada)

- Subjects discussed:
1. Statement by Chairman
 2. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen
 3. Adoption of Agenda
 4. Order of Business

1. Statement by Chairman

The CHAIRMAN addressed the contracting parties on the work before them and formally opened the Ninth Session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. (The text of the Chairman's statement is reproduced in Press Release GATT/165.)

The CHAIRMAN welcomed the representatives of the contracting parties, ~~and the~~ observers of governments who were attending the Session in accordance with rules 8 and 9 of the rules of procedure, particularly those who were present for the first time. In view of the importance of the Review Session, the Intersessional Committee had authorized the Executive Secretary to issue an invitation to send an observer to any government which had participated in the Havana Conference and which indicated a desire to be represented. The Government of Argentina, which was not a signatory of the Final Act of Havana, had expressed a desire to send an observer and an invitation had accordingly been sent and accepted. Argentina would, therefore, be represented by an observer in accordance with rule 9.

2. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen

The CHAIRMAN, referring to the expiry of the terms of office of the present Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen on 24 October of this year, in accordance with rule 10 of the rules of procedure, called for nominations to these offices.

Mr. TAFAZZAL (Pakistan) paid tribute to the long and distinguished service of the present Chairman and proposed that Mr. WILGRESS be re-elected Chairman. He also nominated the present Vice-Chairmen, Mr. GARCIA OLDINI (Chile) and Mr. SEIDENFADEN (Denmark), for re-election.

Mr. VASSILIOU (Greece) seconded the proposal.

There being no other proposals, Mr. Wilgress was declared unanimously re-elected Chairman and Messrs. Garcia Oldini and Seidenfaden Vice-Chairmen.

3. Adoption of Agenda (L/248)

The CHAIRMAN explained that document L/248 (Annotated Provisional Agenda for the Ninth Session) listed the agenda items in the form and order approved by the Intersessional Committee. It included also three additional items which had been proposed for inclusion in the Agenda after the statutory time limit had expired. The Chairman referred contracting parties to the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Agenda and Intersessional Business (L/249), which dealt with the work done between the Eighth and Ninth Sessions.

The Agenda was approved with the inclusion of the three proposed additional items.

4. Order of Business (L/248)

The CHAIRMAN referred to the order of business recommended by the Intersessional Committee, set out in the Annotated Provisional Agenda (L/248).

Mr. PHILIP (France) requested an explanation concerning the proposed Steering Group for the Review of the Agreement. If the Steering Group were to concern itself solely with matters of organization and the order of business for the Review would it not serve better if it were composed solely of the Bureau of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, i.e. the Chairman, the two Vice-Chairmen and the Executive Secretary. If the intention were that it should deal with matters of substance somewhat in the manner of a similar committee of the Havana Conference, it seemed premature to establish such a group now.

The CHAIRMAN replied that the Intersessional Committee intended the proposed Steering Group to deal solely with matters of procedure affecting the Review, and not with the substance. The importance of the Review, however, was such that it warranted including in a Steering Group, in addition to the Bureau, four other representatives chosen by reason of special competence and experience in GATT work. The proposal of the Intersessional Committee as contained in paragraphs 5 and 6 of document L/249 was that the Steering Group

be appointed immediately and formulate a plan of work for the Review. Should it become desirable later to set up a group similar to the Havana Coordinating Committee this would have to be considered separately and would certainly entail a much wider membership.

The proposal for the establishment and composition of a Steering Group was adopted.

The proposed order of business was agreed subject to the possibility of taking up Customs Administration, Item 8 (L/248, 1(vii)), earlier than 22 November. An order of business for the first days of the Session was also agreed.

The CHAIRMAN, referring to his Note on the Christmas recess suggested that the present Session close on Wednesday, 22 December, and reconvene on Tuesday, 4 January 1955.

The meeting adjourned at 4.15 p.m.