

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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CONTRACTING PARTIES
Thirteenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOURTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 17 October 1958, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. L. K. JHA (India)

Subject discussed: Trends in International Trade (continued)

The following statements were made:

- M. André PHILIP (Former Minister, Member
of the Economic Council, France) (cf. Press Release GATT/408)
- Mr. HJORTH-NIELSON (Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, Denmark) (cf. Press Release GATT/409)
- Mr. Edmundo Penna BARBOSA DA SILVA
(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil) (cf. Press Release GATT/410)
- H.E.M. P. A. FORTHOMME (Ambassador, Ministry
of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Belgium) (cf. Press Release GATT/411)
- Mr. H. E. TENNEKOON (Ministry of External
Affairs, Ceylon) (cf. Press Release GATT/412)

At the conclusion of the meeting Ministerial representatives present issued the following communiqué¹:

"Ministerial representatives attending the Thirteenth Session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade today concluded their discussions on major problems of international trade policy. It was the view of the Ministers that, in general, the outlook was promising for a continuing steady expansion in international trade and for substantial further progress in achieving the objectives of the General Agreement. They noted, however, that serious trade and payments problems continued to confront many of the less developed countries, that unsatisfactory conditions still prevailed with respect to world trade in a number of primary commodities, and that special difficulties threatened to impede the future growth of international trade in agricultural products.

¹ The CHAIRMAN'S summing up at the conclusion of the general debate, on 21 October, will be recorded in SR.13/7.

"The Ministers reviewed trends in international trade and in particular took into account a report prepared by four eminent economists at the request of the CONTRACTING PARTIES following a similar Ministerial discussion at the Twelfth Session. Ministers gave careful consideration to the serious problems facing agricultural producers and agreed that a solution to these problems was fundamental to the expansion of international trade. Accordingly they agreed upon the need for a detailed study, within the framework of the General Agreement, of agricultural policies affecting international trade in which all would join.

"The Ministers also took note of the adverse effects on the economies of primary producing countries and on international trade in general of serious price fluctuations and conditions of over-supply for primary products and agreed that alleviations of such difficulties could best be sought on a product-by-product basis.

"The Ministers were also agreed that a more rapid rate of expansion in the export trade of the less developed countries is an essential condition of economic development. They agreed that, in addition to the efforts of the under-developed countries themselves the more developed countries could make an important contribution not only by maintaining conditions favourable to the export trade of less developed countries but also by avoiding commercial policy and other measures which have harmful effects on such trade in respect of both primary products and manufactured goods.

"The Ministers also agreed that consideration should be given to arrangements for a further round of tariff negotiations under the auspices of the General Agreement in the relatively near future.

"In connexion with the Rome Treaty the representatives of the European Economic Community reaffirmed their willingness to enter into consultations with contracting parties on practical problems arising out of the application of the provisions of the Treaty. In particular they indicated their expectation that consultations relating to certain products including tropical foodstuffs could be initiated at the present Session.

"Finally, the Ministers felt that, in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the General Agreement, the CONTRACTING PARTIES might meet oftener and that permanent representation should be strengthened.

"It was agreed that at the present Session appropriate procedures and arrangements should be considered for giving effect to the understandings arrived at by the Ministers.

"In addition to Ministers from a number of contracting parties, two members of the Commission of the European Economic Community took part in the Ministerial discussions.

"At the conclusion the Ministers expressed their great appreciation of the work accomplished by the Panel of Experts in their report, Trends in International Trade; very rarely had a report by economists been so warmly received and widely acclaimed. The Ministers requested the Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to convey their appreciation to the members of the Panel."

The meeting adjourned at 5.45 p.m.