

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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1956 TARIFF CONFERENCE

Tariff Negotiations Committee

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Friday, 20 April at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Paul Koht (Norway)

- Subjects discussed:
1. Progress of negotiations
  2. Arrangements and timing for the publication of the results of the negotiations
  3. Signature of the Protocol
  4. Press communiqué
  5. Review of the results of the Conference

### 1. Progress of negotiations

It appeared from the reports of delegations that numerous negotiations were still to be completed. While most representatives indicated that they hoped to complete their negotiations by 27 April, some said they were not in a position to give any precise indications.

Concern was expressed for this situation: it was pointed out that even when negotiations were completed the signature of a bilateral agreement had sometimes to be delayed by several days in order to clear up technical details. The attention of the Committee was also drawn to the fact that certain countries could make no further progress until between certain other pairs of countries negotiations were concluded. It appeared that there was a considerable degree of interlocking which involved a fairly large number of delegations. There was consequently a risk of delay over a wide front. The suggestion was made by one representative that any such problems which were holding up several negotiations might usefully be brought before the Committee.

## 2. Arrangements and timing for the publication of the results of the negotiations

The Committee decided that participating governments should be free to publish the results of the Tariff Negotiations on 29 May 1956. If necessary this date might be reviewed at the final meeting of the Tariff Negotiations Committee on 23 May.

The representative of the United Kingdom informed the Committee that his Government would have to present a White Paper and make a statement in the House of Commons within 24 hours of publication. Publication would take place at the same time as in the United States and a serious problem would arise if printing of the consolidated schedules had not yet been completed. His Government would need some 200 copies of the schedules at the time of the announcement.

Mr. EVANS (Director of Commercial Policy) replying to the United Kingdom representative said that photo-offset copies could be provided ten days after the date on which the full set of schedules - and their translations - had been sent to the printer. Therefore the date on which these copies would be available would depend upon whether the dates for completion of negotiations and submission of consolidated schedules were met. If the time of going to print had to be delayed it might be necessary to ask each delegation to provide sufficient mimeographed copies of their schedules to cope with the immediate demand of governments. He suggested that any delegation having special requirements for copies should inform the secretariat without delay.

## 3. Signature of the Protocol

In connexion with the discussion on the publication of the schedules, the question was raised whether the schedules of contracting parties who had not signed the Protocol would also be published.

The representative of the United States pointed out that so that the United States may give effect to all its concessions his Government attached great importance to the signature of the Protocol by all contracting parties who had conducted negotiations with the United States.

The Deputy Executive Secretary said that on all previous occasions the schedules had been published irrespective of whether countries participating in the negotiations had signed the Protocol or not. He wished to take this opportunity to refer to the question of ad referendum signatures. The legal department of the United Nations in its capacity of depositary of a number of GATT instruments consistently refused to accept "ad referendum" signatures, unless provision therefore was contained in the instrument itself. The Executive Secretary agreed with the views of the Legal Department but accepted in a few exceptional cases "ad referendum" signature when it was considered useful to obtain a signature from a government and when the absence of such qualification would have involved the final acceptance of the commitments by the Government concerned. In the case of the present protocol,

however, the need for such a deviation from the rule did not arise. The entry into force of the concessions and of any other commitments under the Protocols depended on the notification required by paragraph 2 of the Protocol. To all intents and purposes that notification was a ratification or acceptance. A country's obligations arose only from the moment it gave its notification of intention to apply the concessions contained in its schedule. Unless therefore formal instructions to the contrary were given to the Executive Secretary by the Tariff Conference, he would only accept "unqualified" signatures to the Protocol.

4. Press communiqué

The Deputy Executive Secretary recalled that on the day of signature of the final act of the Torquay Conference the secretariat released a communiqué giving general background information. On the day of publication of schedules a more detailed communiqué was issued, in the preparation of which use was made of the press release of contracting parties which had supplied them to the secretariat in advance. He asked delegations to consider whether they would be willing to follow the same procedure on this occasion.

5. Review of the results of the Conference

The Committee agreed to start the review of the results of the Conference on 3 May 1956.