

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

LDC/M/54

9 January 1967

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## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HELD ON 3 JANUARY 1967

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The fifty-fourth in a series of regular meetings of the informal group of developing countries in GATT was held on 3 January 1967, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Dr. José Antonio Encinas del Pando, Ambassador of Peru. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Korea, Nigeria, Peru, Sierra Leone, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Republic, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.

2. The group discussed the programme of meetings at the Punta del Este session of the Committee on Trade and Development on the basis of the proposal which the Chairman of the Committee had outlined for the group at its previous meeting and which was now made available in written form in COM.TD/W/41. In discussing this proposal, the group directed its attention to two points, namely, (a) whether, and to what extent, the meetings should be open to the public and (b) how the work of the Committee could best be conducted.

3. The Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Valenzuela of Chile, explained that, in drawing up the proposed programme, he had consulted a certain number of delegations, both of developed and developing countries, although it had not been possible to consult each and every delegation. Those which had been consulted were generally of the opinion that some of the meetings of the session should be open to the public but that matters of a technical nature or having delicate political implications, such as those relating to the participation of developing countries in the Kennedy Round, the expansion of trade among developing countries, preferences, etc., would have to be discussed in closed meetings. He had, therefore, proposed that the session at Punta del Este should be a combination of open and closed meetings.

4. In discussing the Chairman's proposal, two delegates mentioned that their delegations, which were among those not consulted by the Chairman, did not feel that they entirely shared the views expressed by him. While recognizing that under Rule 37 of the Rules of Procedures of the CONTRACTING PARTIES it was for the Committee itself to decide whether any particular meetings should be held in public, they considered that the circumstances did not warrant a deviation from the usual GATT practice of holding closed meetings. They felt that, while it may

be appropriate to hold the opening meeting of the Committee and the final closing meeting as open sessions, all other business at the meeting should be conducted in closed sessions. Some other delegates felt that, while statements of a general character could be made in open meetings, technical questions, including questions involving detailed discussion of policies, should be dealt with in restricted meetings.

5. It was suggested that developments in the Trade Centre, trade and aid studies and technical assistance would seem to be subjects which could lend themselves to a useful discussion in an open session since these services were all available to developing countries in general, irrespective of whether they were members of the GATT. Some representatives felt that the discussion of even these matters should not take place in open meetings since they also involve political considerations which delegates might find themselves unprepared to share with the public. If the intention was to inform the public of the services provided by the Centre and of the technical assistance facilities provided by the CONTRACTING PARTIES, these could very well be covered in the Director-General's opening statement or in press communiqués.

6. Although it was recognized that there might be difficulty in determining in advance which subjects were suitable for public discussion and which ones required private debate, other representatives present appeared to be in agreement with the Chairman's proposal along the lines of COM.TD/W/41.

7. As regards the "plenary general debate" envisaged in the Chairman's proposed programme, it was generally agreed that such statements should be kept to a minimum and every effort should be made to ensure that they addressed themselves to matters before the Committee.

8. The informal group designated the representatives of Brazil, Ghana, India, the United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia as members of a special drafting group to work with the Chairman and prepare a set of draft recommendations on the various subjects on the agenda of the session, for consideration by the informal group at its next meeting to be held on, or about, 9 January. The group expects to present these recommendations at the Punta del Este meeting.

9. The group agreed that it would meet during the Punta del Este session, as and when necessary, the first meeting being held prior to the opening of the session on the morning of 16 January. This meeting would carry out a final review of the provisional agenda of the session and continue the exchange of views between developing countries on matters on the agenda.