

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

CPC/38

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Preferential Arrangements Among  
Developing Countries Negotiated  
in GATT

## COMMITTEE OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Summary of Discussion at Fifteenth Meeting  
held on 31 January 1977

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Committee of Participating Countries provided for in the Protocol Relating to Trade Negotiations Among Developing Countries held its fifteenth meeting on 31 January 1977 under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. Bier (Brazil).
2. The draft agenda circulated in document CPC/W/42 was adopted.

### Accession of Bangladesh

3. The Committee noted that as Bangladesh had signed the Protocol of Accession on 29 December 1976, the Protocol Relating to Trade Negotiations Among Developing Countries would enter into force for that country on 29 March 1977. The Committee expressed the hope that participating countries would undertake any domestic measures required to enable Bangladesh to benefit from the schedules of concessions and that Bangladesh would provide the necessary information on its certification of origin arrangements at an early date.

### Countries having expressed interest in exploring possibilities for accession

4. The Chairman said that the secretariat had been in touch with the delegations of those developing countries which had expressed interest in exploring possibilities for accession to the Protocol. While these delegations had nothing new to report and in certain cases had no further communications from their capitals since the previous secretariat enquiry, it would appear that some of these countries were continuing to give consideration to the matter.

5. The Committee took note of the current position and asked the secretariat to report any developments in this connexion at its next meeting.

#### Enlargement of the Protocol

6. The Committee had before it in document CPC/W/43 a summary of points made by a number of delegations at the last meeting of the Committee on Trade and Development and at the thirty-second session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES in favour of a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries within the framework of the Protocol. The Chairman recalled that the Committee had agreed to revert at the present meeting to the question of the possible initiation of the collection by the secretariat of technical data which might serve as background for assessing the prospects of a further round of trade negotiations among developing countries.

7. Several members of the Committee reiterated the views they had expressed previously on the need to seek a substantial widening of both the product coverage and the scope of the existing concessions and enlarging membership of the arrangement as a means of promoting mutual economic development. One of these members drew attention to the undertaking by participating countries which is contained in the Decision of the CONTRACTING PARTIES dated 26 November 1971 to facilitate accession to the Protocol by all developing countries consistent with their individual development, financial and trade needs. These members indicated their support for the proposal that the secretariat commence the collection and updating of basic data on trade and commercial policy including import régimes, development plans, etc. covering participating countries and other interested developing countries with a view to completing the technical preparations for a new round of negotiations at an early date. The International Trade Centre might also be asked to contribute to the preparatory work by providing available information on trade complementarities, export promotion and marketing arrangements for the countries concerned. It was further suggested that the data collection be followed by consultations and preliminary discussions among interested developing countries at the appropriate time. One of these members proposed that the Committee might also, at a later meeting, take up for discussion the points contained in document CPC/W/32 concerning the timing of negotiations, participation, objectives, negotiating techniques, rules for negotiation and negotiating machinery.

8. In also supporting the initiation of the collection and updating of data, other members stated their understanding that this would in no way prejudice the timing of a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries having regard to the importance of giving priority attention to the multilateral trade negotiations.

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, the observer from UNCTAD informed the Committee that the UNCTAD secretariat's suggestions for studies in the trade field pursuant to the recommendations adopted at the Conference on Economic Cooperation Among Developing Countries in Mexico City would be available in a document to be circulated within the next few days. The first meeting of the newly created Committee on Economic Cooperation Among Developing Countries would take place in two parts. The first part, devoted to organizational matters, would be held on 7 and 8 February. The second part, devoted to substantive matters, would take place from 2-6 May 1977.

10. In response to points raised by delegations, the representative of the secretariat said that the GATT and UNCTAD secretariats kept in touch and that in the course of the collection and updating of trade, commercial policy and other data, the secretariat would be drawing largely on sources of information already available to it including data collected in the context of the multilateral trade negotiations. It would of course also take into account the studies proposed by UNCTAD in order to avoid duplication of work to the extent possible and also, if appropriate, to make a contribution to any studies in this area which might be envisaged in that body. In the light of the Committee's support for this activity the secretariat would undertake the technical work proposed, while continuing to give priority attention to matters relating to the multilateral trade negotiations.

11. In his summing up, the Chairman noted that there was a general consensus on the importance of a further round of trade negotiations at the appropriate time open to all interested developing countries which would cover tariffs and other trade measures in the framework of the Protocol. The Committee agreed to ask the secretariat to initiate the collection of technical data that may be helpful in assessing the prospects of a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries taking into account the comments and suggestions made by members. The hope had been expressed that the collection of data could be completed by the end of 1977 if possible. It was also noted that the Committee could revert to the question of timing and other relevant matters in connexion with a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries at a later meeting, in the light of all relevant factors including, in particular, developments in the multilateral trade negotiations.

#### Review of the situation with respect to ratification of the Protocol

12. The Chairman recalled that at its last meeting, the Committee had noted that one original signatory, the Philippines, had still to complete its ratification procedures. It was understood that the question of ratification was under active consideration by the Philippines authorities and that a communication on this

question is expected to be submitted in the near future. With respect to Paraguay, it was understood that the Protocol had been submitted to the Paraguayan Parliament for ratification. The Committee took note of developments with respect to ratification of the Protocol.

#### Certification of origin

13. The Chairman said that additional information concerning certification of origin notified by Mexico was reproduced in CPC/10/Add.8. In addition to the details to be provided by Bangladesh, certain data was still to be made available by Peru which ratified the Protocol in the course of last year. It might be noted that participating countries are expected to notify promptly their certification arrangements including any modifications thereto in order to ensure that concessional rates of duty in the schedules are extended to participating countries. The Committee took note of the Mexican notification and invited any member not having done so, to provide details of their certification arrangements or modifications thereto as soon as possible.

#### Next meeting

14. The Chairman said that in accordance with the usual procedure, the date of the next regular quarterly meeting of the Committee would be fixed by the Chairman in consultation with delegations.