

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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Committee on Trade and Development

Twenty-Fifth Session

## NOTES ON THE AGENDA

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The following notes are made available to assist delegations in their preparations for the twenty-fifth session of the Committee on Trade and Development scheduled for the period 12 to 15 June 1973.

2. In commenting on the future work of the Committee at the last session in March 1973, the Chairman suggested that, at the twenty-fifth session, delegations might take up for further consideration those items which had already been discussed in a preliminary way at the two previous meetings and might also have a first discussion on certain points which had not so far been considered in the Committee. The notes hereunder are arranged accordingly.

I. Matters discussed at the twenty-third and twenty-fourth sessions of the Committee on Trade and Development

(a) Tropical Products

3. Notes on the previous discussion of this subject are contained in the proceedings of the twenty-third session (COM.TD/89, paragraphs 27-39). At the request of delegations, additional material on tariffs and non-tariff measures and trade flows for a number of tropical products, as well as notes on commodity projections to 1980, effective protection, and internal taxes have been issued in document COM.TD/W/189 and addenda 1 and 2. In the light of material now available to the Committee and the earlier discussion at the February meeting, delegations might wish to offer further comments and suggestions on the action that might be taken on tropical products within the framework of the negotiations, including the question of any machinery which might be established for this purpose.

(b) Quantitative Import Restrictions

4. Tabulations concerning import restrictions applied to products of interest to developing countries (COM.TD/W/179/Add.1 and 3)<sup>1</sup> and a secretariat note (COM.TD/W/184) containing a preliminary examination of certain issues relating to the application of

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<sup>1</sup>Corrigenda which, inter alia, update the information in relation to the United Kingdom and Denmark following their accession to the EEC are being issued shortly.

such restrictions served as background material for the discussion on this subject which took place at the March 1973 meeting of the Committee and which was reflected in COM.TD/90, paragraphs 9 to 20.

5. In his summing-up of this discussion, the Chairman, inter alia, referred to the point emerging from the discussion that the Committee should be in a position to establish a list of items of interest to developing countries subject to restriction as a basis for action within the framework of the multilateral trade negotiations. For the further examination of this matter, a background note (COM.TD/W/192) has been issued describing work done in GATT in identifying and examining restrictions on products of interest to developing countries and containing suggestions with respect to procedures for the establishment of any list of restrictions considered necessary within the context of the negotiations.

6. Members may wish to see what further action may be taken on the matter at this stage bearing in mind the Chairman's summing-up at the last session.

(c) Non-tariff Measures

7. The Committee considered this matter on the basis of a background note issued as COM.TD/W/182 which reviewed the work undertaken on such non-tariff measures as valuation for customs purposes, administration of import licensing, standards, health and sanitary regulations and other non-tariff measures of particular interest to developing countries. Certain preliminary proposals put forward by developing countries to deal with these matters in the negotiations are contained in document COM.TD/W/187. Notes on the discussion of this item at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee are to be found in document COM.TD/90 (paragraphs 3 to 8).

8. There was agreement in the Committee on the need to give priority attention to the removal of barriers in which developing countries, including in particular the least developed among them, had a major interest. In this connexion, it was suggested that special problems of developing countries in relation to individual barriers needed to be examined in detail. There also appeared to be general support for the proposal that the developing countries should be given technical assistance to help them comply with various requirements and regulations. Members of the Committee may wish to offer further comments on the matter.

9. With regard to the request that the secretariat carry out studies that would explain more fully the details of the arrangements so far worked out and their implications for developing countries, two such notes (COM.TD/W/190 and 191) have so far been issued dealing with standards and health and sanitary regulations respectively.

(d) Non-reciprocity

10. A background note (COM.TD/W/177) prepared for the twenty-third session of the Committee contained a summary of past discussions in GATT on the principle of non-reciprocity. A comprehensive statement by Brazil at the session on the concept of relative reciprocity was issued as Spec(73)9. The discussion in the Committee (COM.TD/89, paragraphs 8 to 26) was preliminary and exploratory and the Committee agreed to keep the matter under review.

II. Matters not so far taken up for detailed discussion in the Committee

(e) Tariffs

11. Document COM.TD/W/179 contains a summary of the tariff problems raised by developing countries in past sessions of the Committee along with suggested approaches to the reduction and elimination of tariffs on products of interest to developing countries in the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products. This Committee has concentrated its work on the examination of techniques for achieving duty-free trade in industrial products, for linear tariff reductions and for the harmonization of tariffs, having in mind the possibility of a combination of such measures. At its next meeting, scheduled for July, the Committee is to examine in more detail the sector approach, which calls for the consideration of all factors affecting trade in specific sectors.

12. At the last meeting of the Industrial Committee in May 1973, the secretariat undertook to examine the possibility of undertaking a study on the relationship between the Generalized System of Preferences and the future negotiations. The secretariat has since examined this matter further and certain preliminary conclusions with respect to the material that it could make available to delegations may be put before the Committee on Trade and Development.

(f) Agriculture

13. A survey of techniques and modalities for dealing with the principal problems of trade in agricultural commodities is contained in the report of the Working Group on Techniques and Modalities of the Agriculture Committee (COM.AG/W/38). As indicated in the note of transmittal (COM.AG/25), the report reflects the importance which the Agriculture Committee felt should be attached to solving the specific problems of developing countries. It was noted that because the objectives of the negotiations were not known, representatives of developing countries were able to offer only preliminary comments and suggestions in the Working Group on some of the techniques and modalities under discussion (e.g. tariffs and levies, import restrictions, export aids, stabilization arrangements and margins of support). The Working Group expressed the hope that more specific suggestions would be forthcoming from the developing countries in due course to enable any necessary adaptations to be made to meet their particular needs and interests in the agricultural sector.

14. At its meeting in January 1973 (COM.AG/27), the Agriculture Committee focussed attention on three main topics: objectives for the negotiations as they related to agriculture, principles and procedures to govern the negotiations, and the examination of the applicability of the various techniques and modalities identified in the Committee's report (COM.AG/25). Among the comments made by representatives of developing countries was the suggestion that priority attention should be given to agricultural products of interest to developing countries with the objective of achieving improved market access at stable and remunerative prices. Items which should be accorded particular attention included tropical products and temperate zone products of special importance to developing countries. Members were urged to give the various proposals put forward in relation to objectives and a programme of work full attention before the next meeting of the Committee, the date of which would be set by the Chairman in consultation with delegations.

(g) Safeguards

15. Past discussions on safeguards in the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products and on the application of Article XIX in the Committee on Trade and Development are referred to in document COM.TD/W/179. A secretariat note on existing safeguard provisions in GATT and elsewhere was issued as COM.IND/W/88/Rev.1 and a further note on safeguards for the maintenance of access was issued as COM.IND/W/104. In giving consideration to this item, the Committee might note the recent establishment of a Group on Safeguards to examine the adequacy of the multilateral safeguard system of the General Agreement (i) in the light of present conditions and efforts to achieve and preserve a further liberalization and expansion of trade, and (ii) for ensuring the maintenance of access. In carrying out this task, the Group has been asked to give due consideration to the adequacy of the multilateral safeguard system of the General Agreement to the special situation, development problems and needs of developing countries, bearing in mind the objectives of the negotiations agreed at the twenty-eighth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

(h) Other Matters

16. Members of the Committee might wish to bring up for discussion any other points relevant to the July meeting of the Preparatory Committee.