

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

G/16

11 August 1952

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CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS REGARDING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CONTRACTING PARTIES AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Report by the Executive Secretary

The Contracting Parties at their Sixth Session considered the question of cooperation with the United Nations and the avoidance of duplication of work. The United States delegation had suggested to the Contracting Parties that their representatives should consult with representatives of the United Nations with a view to working out arrangements to provide for effective cooperation and the avoidance of unnecessary duplication, for submission to the Seventh Session of the Contracting Parties. The Contracting Parties, however, considered that it would be desirable to explore further between the Sixth and Seventh Sessions the question whether there was a need for more clearly defined arrangements between the Contracting Parties and the Economic and Social Council. In addition to the question of avoiding duplication, the Contracting Parties also referred to facilitating communication between the two bodies. The Contracting Parties accordingly instructed the Executive Secretary to consult with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on this subject and report to the Seventh Session (document GATT/CP.6/41).

In accordance with these instructions, the Executive Secretary has had discussions with the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, representing the Secretary-General, and the present report contains the conclusions arrived at as a result of these discussions.

The Contracting Parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade cannot at this stage be considered as being in the position of a specialized agency. Accordingly, it would not be appropriate to consider the negotiation between the Contracting Parties and the Economic and Social Council of an agreement analogous to those existing between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, which deal with such matters as recognition of jurisdiction, reciprocal representation, proposal of agenda items, general coordination, etc.

In these circumstances, the most appropriate course would be for arrangements to be made between the Executive Secretary and the Secretary-General dealing with such matters as the exchange of information, mutual consultation at the secretariat level, technical cooperation in studies and other projects of common interest, as well as such administrative matters as personnel and financial arrangements.

In practice, however, it would not seem necessary at this stage even to enter into a formal agreement at the secretariat level, since de facto arrangements have been in existence for a considerable period covering these matters between the secretariat of ICITO and the secretariat of the United Nations. These arrangements have so far proved mutually satisfactory to both parties and there would appear to be no advantage in attempting to formalise or further define them.

Moreover, in view of the arrangement between the Contracting Parties and the Interim Commission whereby the Executive Secretary of the latter acts in the capacity of chief executive officer to the Contracting Parties, the informal relations between the ICITO secretariat and the United Nations secretariat have in fact been applied to the operations of the former acting as the GATT secretariat.

It is considered, however, that it would be desirable that the arrangement between the Contracting Parties and the Interim Commission on secretariat arrangements should be formally communicated to the Secretary-General and taken note of by him. This would remove any possible ambiguities as to the appropriate method of communication between the United Nations and the Contracting Parties and would also place on official record the position of the Executive Secretary in relation to the Contracting Parties.