

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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WORKING PARTY 5 ON VALUATION, NATIONALITY OF GOODS AND CONSULAR FORMALITIES

Report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES on Consular Formalities

The reports received by the secretariat from contracting parties on the steps taken towards the abolition of consular formalities have been reproduced in addenda to document L/92. The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of those replies.

1. The governments of the following countries have stated that they have no regulations requiring consular invoices or consular visas:

Australia	Finland	New Zealand
Austria	Germany	Norway
Belgian-Congo	Greece	Pakistan
Canada	India	Southern Rhodesia
Czechoslovakia	Italy	South Africa
Denmark	Netherlands	

2. Several governments have reported that they do not require consular invoices or consular visas except in very special circumstances, namely:

Belgium	Sweden
Ceylon	United Kingdom
Indonesia	

The United Kingdom Government have instituted a review of the requirements in force with a view to their withdrawal.

3. Among the governments which have reported, France, Haiti, Turkey and the United States are the only ones which maintain any extensive system of consular formalities. The Haitian Government express their hope that the development of other sources of public revenue may enable them to relax present requirements in accordance with the recommendation of the CONTRACTING PARTIES. Before the entry into force of the General Agreement, the French Government had already simplified its consular formalities. Since the entry into force of the Agreement, and in particular since the Seventh Session, further simplifications have been brought into this field and at present a large number of transactions are concluded without any consular visas. The French Government is at present considering the possibility to go even further and feels that appreciable simplification still remains possible, but the necessary amendments to laws and regulations will entail further delays. The

regulations at present in force in France conform to the standard practices recommended by the CONTRACTING PARTIES for the interim period. The United States Government considers that progress towards the elimination of the requirements for consular invoices has been made during the past year, and that their present regulations conform to the standard practices recommended by the CONTRACTING PARTIES so far as the interim period is concerned. The United States Government also stated that under the Customs Simplification Act the Secretary of the Treasury has discretion to require certified invoices with respect to such merchandise as he deems advisable and to establish terms under which goods may be imported without a certified invoice. The Secretary of the Treasury also has authority to eliminate such invoices if he finds it feasible to do so.

4. The Working Party took note of a statement by the representative of Brazil that his Government had under consideration a new provision under which they would no longer require both a visaed commercial invoice and a consular invoice but that they had not been able to agree to dispense with consular formalities entirely. They would have to require either a consular invoice or a consular visa on the commercial invoice. A representative of the Dominican Republic stated that his country was not at present able to dispense with their consular formalities, but that they had raised the exemption limit from 50 dollars to 100 dollars.

5. The following governments have submitted no written report:

Brazil	Dominican Republic
Burma	Nicaragua
Chile	Peru
Cuba	

The Working Party recommends that these countries should be requested to furnish their written replies at the earliest possible date and that the replies should then be circulated to all contracting parties.

6. The Working Party noted with satisfaction that some progress has been made, or is going to be made, by countries in the direction of a relaxation of consular formalities but renews attention to the Recommendation passed by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at the Seventh Session calling for the gradual reduction of consular formalities with a view to their entire elimination by 31 December 1956 and recommends that the CONTRACTING PARTIES press for the early implementation of this Recommendation.