

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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AGREEMENT ON THE IMPORTATION OF EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL MATERIALS

Communication from the Acting Director-General of UNESCO

The Executive Secretary has received the following letter from the Acting Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization:

" I have the honour to recall that the Contracting Parties at their Third Session at Annecy in 1949 rendered to UNESCO the great service of advising our Organization on the possibility of establishing an international Agreement to reduce tariff and trade obstacles to the circulation of educational, scientific and cultural materials.

" It will be remembered that the Contracting Parties at the Third Session set up a Committee of Experts which drafted a tentative text of such an Agreement. The Chairman of the Contracting Parties, at the request of the Tariff Negotiations Committee, transmitted this text to UNESCO with the observation that it 'represents a substantial common ground among the tariff practices of many countries with regard to educational, scientific and cultural materials' and 'that it was therefore capable of receiving wide adherence.

" I should be grateful if I might take the occasion of the current session of the Contracting Parties to report on the progress achieved in this undertaking which your Organization was so instrumental in promoting.

" The draft prepared by the Annecy Conference, as amended at a meeting attended by representatives of 25 countries in Geneva in March 1950, was adopted unanimously by the General Conference of UNESCO later that year. The text entitled The Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials, was opened for signature at the Headquarters of the United Nations on 22 November 1950. It entered into force on 21 May 1952.

" The Agreement has been ratified or accepted to date by the following countries:

Cambodia	Philippines
Ceylon	Salvador
Cuba	Sweden
Egypt	Switzerland
Israel	Thailand
Laos	Viet-Nam
Monaco	Yugoslavia
Pakistan	

" The following countries have signed but not yet ratified the Agreement:

Afghanistan	Greece
Belgium	Guatemala
Bolivia	Haiti
China	Iran
Colombia	Luxembourg
Dominican Republic	Netherlands
Ecuador	New Zealand
France	United Kingdom

" If I may be allowed to do so, I should like to express the hope that the distinguished delegates attending the current session of the Contracting Parties, to whom in their own countries the Agreement may be referred for consideration, will do everything possible to promote adherence to it. I take the liberty of seeking renewed support because the past four years have amply proved the correctness of the conclusion of the Annecy Conference that this Agreement is capable of enlisting the participation of many countries. I look forward to the day when its widespread application will substantially increase access to the materials of education, science and culture, thus contributing effectively to enlightenment and international understanding."