

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/537

1 October 1956

Limited Distribution

PROCEDURES FOR ELECTIONS

Report by the Intersessional Committee

At the Tenth Session the delegate for Pakistan proposed that the CONTRACTING PARTIES should establish a procedure to be followed when they are required to hold elections. The following was his proposal:

1. The secretariat should distribute to delegations a factual note giving background information relating to the election.
2. One week after the distribution of the secretariat note a meeting of Heads of Delegations should be called.
3. The meeting of Heads of Delegations should be open only to the head of each delegation in person. No records should be maintained. This meeting should freely and frankly discuss the proposed election, determine the dates for nominations and for the election, and take decisions regarding all matters bearing on such nominations and the election.
4. Nominations and the election should thereafter be held in accordance with the decisions of the Heads of Delegations.

This proposal was discussed by the CONTRACTING PARTIES (SR.10/17) and was referred to the Intersessional Committee for further study. To assist the Committee in its consideration of this matter, the Executive Secretary put forward the following suggestions:

I. Election of Officers (rule 10 of the rules of procedure)

When the CONTRACTING PARTIES are required to elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, the following procedure might be followed:

1. The Executive Secretary would invite contracting parties to submit nominations not later than thirty days prior to the opening of the session at which the election is to be held. The Executive Secretary would inform all contracting parties of the nominations received.

2. The Intersessional Committee, at its meeting the day before the opening of the session, would review the nominations received and make recommendations to the CONTRACTING PARTIES. The Committee would also submit recommendations as to the date on which the election should be held and concerning any other matters relating thereto. When the Committee considers this question it would go into executive session, i.e. only one representative of each member and of each contracting party exercising its right to be represented at the meetings of the Committee would be present and no record of the discussion would be taken. (It will be recalled that, under the general procedures of the Committee, any contracting party, not a member of the Committee, may ask to be co-opted as a full member.)
3. At the request of any contracting party, the recommendations of the Committee would be considered at a meeting of the Heads of Delegations before being considered by the CONTRACTING PARTIES. Any meeting of the Heads of Delegations convened for this purpose would be open to only one representative of each contracting party (the head of delegation or his deputy) and no record of the discussion would be taken.
4. Any contracting party would, of course, have the right to put forward nominees in addition to those submitted by the Intersessional Committee.

II. Election of Intersessional Committee

At the request of any contracting party, a meeting of Heads of Delegations would be convened prior to the election of a new Committee to discuss any matters relating thereto. Any such meeting would be open to only one representative of each contracting party (the head of delegation or his deputy) and no record of the discussion would be taken.

III. Other Elections or Nominations

When the CONTRACTING PARTIES are called upon to elect or nominate a person for any other office, the procedure under I would be followed. In issuing the invitation for contracting parties to submit nominations, the Executive Secretary would furnish relevant information concerning the post to be filled.

The proposal by the delegate for Pakistan and the suggestions by the Executive Secretary were discussed by the Committee at its meeting on 11 - 14 September 1956. The Committee concluded that it was neither necessary nor desirable at the present time for the CONTRACTING PARTIES to lay down rigid rules for the conduct of elections. The Committee considered that the suggestions by the Executive Secretary should be referred to the CONTRACTING PARTIES for information, but that no decision as to their adoption should be taken at the Eleventh Session, and decided to recommend that the CONTRACTING PARTIES in the election of a Chairman and Vice-Chairmen should proceed along the general lines proposed by the delegate for Pakistan at the Tenth Session.