

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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IMPORT RESTRICTIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (LEOPOLDVILLE)

By a letter dated 10 March 1961, the Government of the Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville) has advised the Executive Secretary that, in applying de facto the General Agreement to the contracting parties as envisaged in the Recommendation of the CONTRACTING PARTIES of 18 November 1960, it is maintaining restrictions on imports under the relevant provisions of the Agreement for the purpose of safeguarding the balance of payments and monetary reserves. For the information of the contracting parties the Government has transmitted a statement, which is reproduced below, and a list of products permitted for importation, which is kept on file for consultation at the secretariat.

In virtue of Article 5, paragraph 2 of the Decree of the Commissioner General for Foreign Trade dated 3 October 1960, "licences (import) shall only be delivered for products appearing on the import list prepared by the Exchange Commission and within the limits of the quotas of foreign currency assigned for imports by the said Committee".

Exceptions to this general provision may be granted in virtue of the first sentence of Article 24 of the said Decree which reads as follows:

"Applications for exceptions to the present provisions, as well as cases not otherwise provided for, shall be exclusively dealt with, as regards goods and prices, by the Ministry of Foreign Trade with the advice of the Ministry of Economic Affairs."

These restrictions shall be applied in an absolutely non-discriminatory manner. The importer shall be entitled to choose the country of origin and/or provenance.

Nevertheless, this choice must be made before the validation of the licence; the applicant must indicate the country, and the foreign currency which he desires to purchase, before submitting the document.

Among the products admitted in excess of the amounts authorized for foreign exchange quotas, a choice shall be made on the basis of the order of priority assigned to different categories of goods. This order of priority is as follows:

- (a) pharmaceutical products;
- (b) chemical products necessary for public health such as insecticides;
- (c) food products of primary necessity;
- (d) liquid fuels;
- (e) spare parts for factories;
- (f) educational material;
- (g) malt, hops, essences for brewing, caustic soda;
- (h) packing materials.

These measures had been preceded by the Ministerial Decree of 2 August 1960, Article 1 of which stipulated the following:

"The sale of foreign currency against Congolese francs is prohibited as from 0 hours on 3 August 1960. The delivery of import permits shall be suspended as from the same date; unutilized permits are also suspended."

These restrictions had to be introduced with the greatest urgency, so that the Republic was unable to enter into preliminary consultations with the Organization.