

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/1568/Add.1
9 October 1961

Limited Distribution

Original: French

HAITIAN TARIFF REFORM

Statement by the Representative of Haiti to the Council on 2 October 1961

As my delegation pointed out at last Friday's meeting, this is the first time that my Government has requested permission to renegotiate concessions since it acceded to the General Agreement in 1949.

Concessions granted twelve years ago may understandably require some modification, and moreover this is recognized by the General Agreement which mentions a three-year period of validity.

The renegotiations to which the Haitian Government request relates are necessary partly because of the adoption of the Brussels nomenclature and partly on account of budgetary and economic requirements.

The transposition of the Haitian customs nomenclature into the Brussels nomenclature has caused some changes in the text and also in the duties. It was not possible in every case to solve the technical difficulties arising from the transposition by establishing new sub-items. In some places we have had to broaden and in others to limit the scope of a negotiated tariff item. My delegation is well aware that there is no need for renegotiation when the item originally negotiated has been extended by the new wording, but it also realizes that in the contrary case the interests of the other party to the negotiation are adversely affected and that renegotiation is therefore necessary.

It might seem unnecessary to mention in the list annexed to document L/1568 any concessions whose scope has been broadened by the introduction of the new nomenclature. My delegation nevertheless decided to include such modifications in the annex since, after all, they are modifications to Schedule XXVI. In practice therefore the list is shorter than it appears to be.

Turning now to budgetary requirements, I must recall that the budget of the Republic of Haiti for the financial year 1 October 1961 - 30 September 1962 has been approved by the Legislature and was drawn up on the basis of the new tariff, which must therefore be applied without undue delay.

The economic considerations justifying modifications to Schedule XXVI, which was drawn up twelve years ago, are self-evident. In 1949, when my Government granted those tariff concessions, the country had not yet developed or established certain branches of industry. Since then, however, an extensive programme for progressive and rational industrialization has been instituted, and among other governmental measures it calls for the promotion of investment through legislative action such as the lowering of import duties or even the granting of customs exemption and, for a limited period, exemption from income tax.

To-day Haitian factories produce certain manufactured goods which, if not always for export, are at least for domestic consumption. This obviously calls for some readjustment of Schedule XXVI, and my Government is fully disposed, as required by Article XXVIII moreover, to grant by way of compensation for certain concessions which must be withdrawn, other concessions which are no less favourable.

I hope that this explanation has answered the question raised by the United States delegation.