

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/5733

19 November 1984

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REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE IN AGRICULTURE

1. The Committee on Trade in Agriculture was established pursuant to the November 1982 Ministerial Declaration to carry out a major two-year programme of work and to make recommendations with a view to achieving greater liberalization in the trade in agricultural products. The Committee's terms of reference (L/5424) require it to make appropriate recommendations to the Council and the CONTRACTING PARTIES for consideration not later than their 1984 Session.
2. The Committee met under the Chairmanship of Mr. Aert de Zeeuw (Netherlands Director-General of Agriculture).
3. The work of the Committee has been carried out in several phases. The organizational arrangements, including the format and procedures for the notification of measures affecting trade in agriculture and their status under the GATT, were considered and approved at meetings of the Committee in March and June 1983.
4. The next phase of the Committee's work involved an examination, with respect to the European Communities and forty-one countries*, of trade measures affecting market access and supplies, including measures maintained under exceptions or derogations, and an examination of the operation of the General Agreement as regards subsidies affecting trade in agriculture, including export subsidies and other forms of export assistance. These examinations were substantially completed in early 1984. A full record of these examinations is contained in document AG/M/3 and addenda.

* Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United States, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.

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5. The Committee then proceeded at its March 1984 meeting to a preliminary consideration of conclusions, on the basis, inter alia, of a secretariat report highlighting the essential aspects which had emerged from the examination phase of the Committee's work (AG/W/5 and 6 refer). Following a meeting of the Committee at Senior Policy Level in April 1984, to which a Non Paper was submitted by the Chairman, the secretariat was commissioned to prepare, in consultation with the Chairman, the text of a set of draft recommendations (AG/W/7). This text (AG/W/8) was the subject of initial consideration at a meeting of the Committee in June (AG/W/10 refers).

6. A revised version of the draft recommendations (AG/W/8/Rev.1), together with a secretariat explanatory note on the general approach embodied therein (AG/W/9) were considered at the September meeting of the Committee. At this meeting, divergent views emerged on several aspects of the revised draft recommendations, particularly on the approach proposed for elaboration on export subsidies and other forms of export assistance, and on certain matters related to the overall balance of the revised text (AG/W/11 refers). The amendments proposed by certain delegations were subsequently presented in the form of an alternative version of the draft recommendations (Spec(84)53).

7. Following a series of informal consultations undertaken by the Chairman, the Committee met at Senior Policy Level on 15 November 1984 and agreed that the recommendations which now appear in document L/5732 be submitted for consideration to the Council and the CONTRACTING PARTIES. In reaching this agreement the European Communities recalled that the 1982 Ministerial Declaration covered a certain number of areas and made its definitive approval of the recommendations conditional on an overall assessment of the results achieved in these other areas.

8. As agreed by the Committee, the present report to the Council has been made by the Chairman on his own responsibility.