

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON

RESTRICTED

L/6257

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TARIFFS AND TRADE

Limited Distribution

REPORT (1987) OF THE COMMITTEE ON IMPORT LICENSING

1. This report, submitted under Article 5.5 of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures, sets out developments in the implementation and operation of the Agreement since the Committee's last report on 31 October 1986 (L/6064).
2. The Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures entered into force on 1 January 1980. As of 9 October 1987 there were twenty-seven signatories to the Agreement: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, the European Economic Community, Finland, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, United States and Yugoslavia. Argentina and Mexico have signed the Agreement subject to ratification or approval.
3. The following twenty-seven governments have observer status in the Committee on Import Licensing: Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Malta, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela and Zaire. Two international organizations, IMF and UNCTAD, have attended meetings of the Committee in an observer capacity.

Developments since the Committee's last report (L/6064)

4. Four meetings of the Committee have been held during 1987, on 19 March (LIC/M/17 and L/6157), 19 May (LIC/M/18 and L/6193), 29 September (LIC/M/19 and L/6223) and 9 October (LIC/M/20 and L/6230). The Committee has held twenty regular meetings overall since the coming into force of the Agreement.

¹A note on a special meeting of the Committee held in April 1985 concerning the implementation of the Agreement with respect to developing countries is contained in document LIC/8.

5. During 1987, Mexico accepted the Agreement ad referendum on 24 July 1987. (See L/5808/Add.14 and LIC/1/Add.38.) Poland's instrument of ratification of the Agreement was accepted on 25 February 1987 (L/5808/Add.13). The Agreement entered into force for Poland on 27 March 1987. Statements by Poland concerning its import licensing system are noted in LIC/M/17 and a notification from Poland concerning publications and legislation was circulated in LIC/1/Add.39.
6. China became an observer in the Committee from 19 March 1987. China's request for observer status and statements made by signatories are reported in LIC/M/17.
7. During the reporting period, signatories communicated regularly to the Committee, in accordance with Article 5.4 of the Agreement, changes in their laws and regulations and in the administration of such laws and regulations relevant to the Agreement (LIC/1 and addenda). Copies of publications containing information on new rules concerning import licensing procedures of lists of products subject to licensing requirements were made available to the secretariat as and when published (LIC/3, corrigenda and addenda). In addition, seventeen signatories have brought up to date the data supplied by them in response to the GATT Questionnaire on Import Licensing Procedures (annexed to L/5640/Rev.3). The replies to the questionnaire are issued as addenda to L/5640.
8. At the seventeenth meeting of the Committee, one Party drew attention to its government's decision to terminate import licensing on all goods, except those covered by specific industry plans which contain their own particular phase-out dates, on 1 July 1988 (LIC/M/17, paragraph 14).
9. At the seventeenth and eighteenth meetings, the Committee continued the examination of its work programme concerning the application of Articles 1.4, 1.6, 3(c), 3(d), 3(e) and 3(g) of the Agreement. Recommendations concerning these Articles were adopted at the eighteenth meeting and are set out in LIC/12. Statements made during the meeting are contained in LIC/M/18. The issue of the definition of "import licensing" under Article 1.1, raised by one Party, remains on the agenda of the Committee.
10. At the nineteenth meeting, the Committee considered a request by one Party that a Panel be established under Article 4.2 of the Agreement to examine the consistency with the Agreement of another Party's licensing procedures as applied to almond imports. The Committee agreed that a panel should be established with terms of reference and membership to be worked out by the Chairman in consultation with the delegations concerned (LIC/M/19, L/6223).
11. At its twentieth meeting, the Committee undertook its regular biennial review of the operation of the Agreement.

12. At the seventeenth and twentieth meetings, the Committee discussed the relationship of its work to the Uruguay Round. The Committee considered the request by the Chairman of the Negotiating Group on MTN Agreements and Arrangements to all Committees to provide the Group with information on their work, including on informal meetings. The question of the relationship between the negotiations in the Group and technical discussion of the issues in the Committee was discussed. It was agreed that, as a minimum, the Chairman's notes issued in the L/- series after each meeting of the Committee, and the annual reports of the Committee to the CONTRACTING PARTIES, would be transmitted to the Negotiating Group; decisions could be taken by the Committee on what other documentation could be forwarded, and the Chairman would hold consultations on the question of how to deal with information on informal consultations. It was agreed that at present the Chairman's notes to the CONTRACTING PARTIES for the seventeenth, eighteenth and twentieth meetings (L/6157, L/6193 and L/6230) and the present Report, should be forwarded, as well as the recommendations adopted in May 1987 (LIC/12). It was stressed that a free flow of information in both directions between the Committee and the Negotiating Group was desirable to ensure transparency.