

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

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1960-61 TARIFF CONFERENCE
Tariff Negotiations Committee

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING IN ORDINARY SESSION

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 20 February 1962, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. E. Wyndham White

Subjects discussed: 1. Review of developments in the light of
arrangements made at the last meeting

2. Closing date of the Conference

1. Review of developments in the light of arrangements made at
the last meeting

The Chairman recalled what had been decided at the meeting of the Tariff Negotiations Committee on 19 January with regard to the conclusion of negotiations and said that he thought that these recommendations were still valid. He saw no advantage in renewing these recommendations. The leaders of the delegations which had not yet concluded their negotiations should make suitable arrangements between themselves for the early conclusion of their outstanding negotiations.

The delay in the termination of the Tariff Conference had caused certain difficulties for the Government of the United States and the meeting had been convened in order to give the representative of the United States an opportunity to present a proposal the aim of which was to overcome these difficulties.

The representative of the United States said that the hearings in Congress in connexion with the introduction of the new trade bill were expected to start on 5 March. It was desirable that as many results as possible from the present Tariff Conference could be published by the time the hearings were to begin. According to the American legal procedure it was not, however, possible to proclaim the results of the negotiations until a formal trade agreement had been signed. As it was clearly impossible that the protocols embodying the results of the Tariff Conference could enter into force before the end of February, the Government of the United States had come to the conclusion that the only solution would be to convert the agreements on tariff concessions reached during the Tariff Conference into formal bilateral trade agreements with all countries which were willing to do so. These bilateral agreements

would then, of course, be superseded by the protocols embodying the results of the Conference, when these were opened for signature.

He said that the United States had concluded their Dillon round negotiations with the exception - apart from Spain - only of Sweden. It was hoped that an agreement with Sweden could be reached within a few days. He hoped that formal bilateral agreements could be entered into with the countries willing to do so before the end of the last week of February. It would be very much appreciated if the countries concerned could inform his delegations by Thursday 22 February if they were in a position to enter into such bilateral agreements.

It was the intention of his Government to put all concessions in force at the same time. Concessions agreed upon in the bilateral agreements to be signed the following week would only enter into force after a delay of two and a half months. This would give sufficient time for concessions negotiated with countries who were not in a position to sign bilateral agreements to be put into force simultaneously.

The representative of the Commission of the EEC said that he had full understanding for the difficulties of the United States. His delegation would do its utmost to be in a position to sign a bilateral agreement with the United States.

The representatives of Peru, Japan, Finland, Sweden, New Zealand, Norway and Israel also stated that they hoped to be in a position to sign bilateral agreements with the United States.

The representative of France - on behalf of the member States of the EEC - said that he understood the difficulties of the Government of the United States and realized the great importance of Mr. Kennedy's tariff reduction plans. The member States were certainly going to try to help the United States as far as they could. In answer to a question by the representative of Portugal, the representative of France confirmed that the member States were going to do their best to terminate the Conference as soon as possible.

The representative of Canada said that he was unfortunately not able to agree to the proposal made by the representative of the United States. There would be big presentation problems in Canada if the results of the Article XXIV:6 negotiations could not be published at the same time as the results agreed upon with the United States. He had been informed by the representative of the Commission that the final offers by the Community could not be expected until after the Council meeting on 5 March. Another difficulty was that the question of the indirect benefits had not yet been settled with the Community. The time limit was furthermore very narrow for examining and approving the bilateral agreements proposed by the United States.

The representative of Denmark also expressed grave doubts about the possibility of getting a bilateral agreement approved in time by his Government.

The Chairman said that there were clearly difficulties involved in many cases. The delegation of the United States would certainly understand if not all countries were in a position to meet the American request. It was a pity that a singular failure of the Tariff Negotiations Committee to enforce the normal negotiating rules should have made it impossible to get a clear picture of the status of the negotiations.

The representative of the United Kingdom said that his delegation would certainly try to come to a bilateral agreement with the United States. He pointed out that the United States were willing to conclude their negotiations without having been able to estimate the value of the indirect benefits it was going to receive. It would probably, however, be very important for many delegations if they could get a clear picture of the indirect benefits they were going to obtain.

The representative of the United States recalled that his delegation had informed all delegations with which they were negotiating about all concessions given to other countries. Insofar as concessions to the EEC were concerned, his delegation wished to preserve the general rule that the contents of an agreement should not be made known until it was formally concluded. He was, however, prepared to inform countries with a direct interest of concessions which had been offered by the United States to the EEC.

The representative of Canada confirmed that the United States had scrupulously adhered to the rules for the circulating of results to the participating countries. The main difficulty in this respect was that the Community did not want to inform other delegations about its offers until final agreements had been reached.

The representative of the Commission said that his delegation would reconsider the problem case for case to see if there was any possibility that the offers could be communicated to other countries.

The Chairman pointed out that the circulation of this information was in conformity with the rules of the Conference.

The representative of Austria pointed out that it would be useful to have as soon as possible a picture of the attitude of the different governments concerned to the American proposal.

The Chairman asked the delegations to inform the secretariat of their position at the same time as they got in touch with the United States delegation.

The representative of Austria also stressed that it would be useful if the American delegation could make copies of a draft bilateral agreement available.

The representative of the United States said that his delegation would try to circulate such texts the same day.

The Chairman pointed out that it would be necessary to establish a procedure for the ultimate incorporation of the concessions contained in the bilateral agreements in the final protocols of the Tariff Conference.

2. Closing date of the Conference

The representative of Uruguay recalled that a time-table for the conclusion of the negotiations and the opening for signature of the protocols had been fixed at the meeting of the Tariff Negotiations Committee at its meeting on 19 January 1962. He would like to know whether this time-table was still valid.

The Chairman said that it was his understanding that the arrangements referred to by the representative of Uruguay were still standing.

The representative of Sweden said that the Swedish delegation was going to do its best to adhere to this time-table but he wanted to point out that a quite new element had been introduced into the negotiations by the Commission only a few days earlier. He had, however, got the impression from the statement made by the delegate of France that the member States of the Community also wanted to conclude the negotiation at an early date.