

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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Trade Negotiations Committee of Developing Countries

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TWELFTH MEETING

Held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 6 August 1971, at 4.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. O. LONG

Subject discussed: Procedures and time-table for remaining stages of the negotiations

1. Members of the Committee noted with appreciation the wish of the Governments of Gabon and Ghana to join the Committee and to participate actively in the trade negotiations among developing countries.
2. The Chairman recalled that at the Committee's meeting held on 29 March 1971 it was agreed that the further work in the negotiations should proceed through the following stages: (i) exchange of information with a view to elaboration and enlargement of offers as well as the addition of new products to offer lists; (ii) the mutual balancing of concessions on a bilateral basis; and (iii) eventual notification and circulation of consolidated lists of concessions. In accordance with this programme consultations had been held between delegations, reinforced in many instances by experts from headquarters, with a view to completing the bilateral phase of the negotiations before the summer recess. As a result of efforts made by the participants, substantial success in completing the bilateral phase of the negotiations had been achieved by the target date. Thus a total of some forty agreements had been concluded to date between fourteen countries. It was expected that over the next two weeks some of these delegations will have concluded certain other agreements with respect to which final instructions were awaited from their authorities. It was also expected that a certain number of delegations who, until now, had not been able to conclude specific agreements would be in a position to do so very shortly. He urged the delegations concerned to secure the necessary instructions and to complete their negotiations as quickly as possible.
3. The secretariat should be in a position to prepare later in the month a consolidated schedule embodying concessions exchanged bilaterally. There should be a possibility for the further deepening and broadening of the concessions exchanged once the countries concerned had reviewed the results of the negotiations and were in a position to respond to requests which at the present time were still under consideration.

4. Agreement had also to be reached on the text of the legal provisions governing the application of concessions and with respect to the operation of rules of origin. In the light of the agreements reached with respect to these matters and the multilateral review and finalization of concessions, the initial package resulting from these negotiations should be presented to the CONTRACTING PARTIES early in October, so that they would have sufficient time to take the appropriate decisions at their twenty-seventh session in November. Certain suggestions in this regard concerning specific dates for the discussion of these elements had already been discussed informally with delegations (cf. INT(71)63 and 64).
5. It should be borne in mind that these negotiations were an open-ended exercise and that even after the final package of concessions had been approved, other developing countries would have an opportunity to enter into negotiations and to contribute to this package as and when they were ready to do so.
6. The Chairman invited comments and suggestions on the work programme outlined by him.
7. The representative of Brazil said that the present round of negotiations had made it possible to have a better understanding of trading possibilities among developing countries which should make it easier for participants to conduct future negotiations. Brazil had concluded agreements with six participants, and agreements with another two countries might be concluded later. Although the agreements might appear modest in terms of the amount of trade involved, they were of considerable significance in the sense that they manifested the political will of participating countries to open new vistas for their mutual trade. While endorsing the time-table for completing the remaining phases of the negotiations, he expressed the hope that sufficient consideration would be given to the establishment of the rules and procedures to govern the application of concessions and of rules of origin. He was confident that with goodwill and imagination these could be worked out to the satisfaction of all concerned.
8. The representative of India said that the results achieved in the negotiations should be looked upon as the starting point of a wider effort on the part of governments to go ahead with the exercise on a continuing basis. During these negotiations requests for concessions on additional items had been exchanged. A number of agreements reached between delegations had remained unfinished for lack of instructions from governments. He urged participating countries to expedite instructions from their governments both in respect of supplementary items as well as of agreements not yet concluded so that these might be finalized by the third week of August. It was important that the concluding phases of the negotiations should be completed in time so that the results could be presented to the CONTRACTING PARTIES at least six weeks before their twenty-seventh session in November. He expressed the hope that all members of the Trade Negotiations Committee as well as other developing countries which so far had not been in a position for one reason or another to participate in the negotiations, would join in this common endeavour to promote trade among developing countries.

9. The representative of Chile said that his delegation had signed agreements with seven participants. Consultations with other participants were in progress in an endeavour to conclude further agreements. The results might not appear spectacular but it was a matter of satisfaction that a good start had been made. These efforts should be on a continuing basis not only to improve the agreements already reached but also to accommodate the participation of a larger number of developing countries. The results of the negotiations should be presented to the CONTRACTING PARTIES well in time for consideration at the twenty-seventh session.
10. The representative of Greece expressed satisfaction at the positive outcome of the negotiations which provided the basis for the establishment of a preferential system among developing countries. He also expressed the hope that the results already achieved would serve as a catalyst for the participation of other developing countries in the system.
11. The representative of the Philippines said that the participation of her Government in these negotiations had demonstrated its desire to share its trade with other developing countries. The concept that would emerge from these trading arrangements was something novel in the sense that for the first time developing countries had taken cognizance of the necessity to bind themselves together to promote trade among themselves. Although the results achieved at this stage might appear modest, it was the hope of her Government that such negotiations would continue, permitting other developing countries to join and thus enlarge the dimensions of these arrangements. The Philippines had concluded agreements with eight participating countries and it was hoped that agreements with certain other participants would be concluded shortly.
12. The representative of Peru expressed the hope that within the next ten days or so his delegation would be in a position to conclude agreements with several participating countries.
13. The representative of Spain said that the conclusion of the first phase of these negotiations had paved the way for all developing countries to take advantage of the preferential arrangements being established. The Spanish delegation had concluded agreements with seven participants and hoped to negotiate more agreements shortly. In order to facilitate the work of the Committee on the question of the rules and procedures that would govern the negotiated concessions and the origin rules, the secretariat might prepare a summary of all that had been done up to now in this regard.
14. The representative of Israel said that her delegation had concluded agreements with five participating countries. Efforts were being made to complete agreements with other participants. According to the programme of work outlined in INT(71)64 discussion of provisions to govern the application of concessions, including rules of origin, was due to commence on 13 September and a multilateral review of the schedule of concessions had to be completed by 30 September. This meant that the participants should be fully equipped to deal with these matters simultaneously.

15. The representative of Turkey said that agreements with ten participating countries had been concluded. His delegation would be available throughout August to resume discussions with a view to reaching agreements with other countries if so desired. An analysis of the consolidated schedule of concessions by the secretariat bringing out the direct and indirect benefits accruing to each participant would be most helpful in dealing with the multilateral phase of the negotiations.
16. The representative of the United Arab Republic said that agreements with five participants had been concluded and it was the hope of his delegation that agreements with a number of other participants would be reached in due time. While these agreements were both few in number and covered only a limited range of products, they constituted a first step towards expansion of trade among developing countries generally. The success of the first round of the negotiations should attract the participation of a greater number of developing countries. He expressed the hope that the work connected with these negotiations would be on a continuing basis with a view to providing opportunities for further agreements.
17. The representative of Tunisia said that although his Government joined the negotiations very recently, it had been possible to conclude agreements with four participants. He proposed that the work of the Committee should be so oriented as to permit the participation of a greater number of developing countries. Further, the Committee should also give consideration to the question how the least developed among developing countries could benefit from the preferential arrangements that were being negotiated.
18. The representative of Yugoslavia assured the Committee that his delegation would continue to co-operate as positively as possible with a view to seeing that all the stages of the negotiations were completed by 30 September. He expressed the hope that the membership of the Committee would continue to expand so that it may become a more widely representative body of developing countries.
19. The representative of the Republic of Korea said that his delegation had held consultations with ten participants. Although it had not yet been possible to conclude any agreements until now, his delegation was persevering with its efforts. His Government would continue to pursue the policy of promoting trade with both developed and developing countries.
20. The representative of Mexico, supporting the suggested programme of work, stressed the need for a concerted effort on the part of the Committee to conclude all the phases of the negotiations by the specified dates.
21. In response to a number of points raised, the Chairman said that background papers concerning rules of origin and rules and procedures for the application of concessions would be made available as soon as possible. The secretariat would continue to provide technical assistance to delegations in the multilateral phase of the negotiations aimed at effecting improvements in the lists of concessions without prejudice to the time-table set.

22. Summing up, the Chairman said that it was clear from the statements made by delegations that the first round of the negotiations had been completed to the satisfaction of all concerned. There was a general desire to achieve more, to reach agreement on the outstanding points and to complete the subsequent phases of the negotiations by the target dates. In the next two weeks the signing of further agreements should be completed, permitting the secretariat to prepare a consolidated list of all concessions exchanged. This list would be made available to delegations representing countries who have participated actively in the negotiations. Further, steps should be taken to establish a legal framework for the negotiated concessions, including rules of origin. All this should be completed by 1 October so that the results could be presented to the CONTRACTING PARTIES six weeks ahead of their twenty-seventh session in November. Thereafter, consideration would have to be given to the question of implementing the first package of concessions as soon as feasible. A press communiqué would be issued at an appropriate time when all the stages of the negotiations had been finally concluded.

23. The Committee agreed that the work on the subsequent stages of the negotiations should be carried out according to the time-table set out in INT(71)64.