

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

LDC/M/105  
21 August 1972

Special Distribution

---

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INFORMAL GROUP  
OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
HELD ON 10 JULY 1972

Prepared by the secretariat

1. A meeting of the Informal Group of Developing Countries in GATT was held on 10 July 1972 under the chairmanship of Mr. J.R. Samaranayake, representative of Ceylon. Present were the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Ceylon, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Senegal, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.
2. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange views on matters on the annotated provisional agenda for the meeting of the Committee on Trade and Development scheduled for 17-18 July (COM.TD/W/165). Comments were made on some of the agenda items, a summary of which is recorded below.

Report of the Group of Three (L/3710)

3. Introducing the report of the Group of Three, Ambassador Archibald (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the Group was fully conscious of its responsibility towards follow-up action on recommendations contained in the earlier report of the Group (L/3610). He noted that the delegations of developed countries had been very co-operative in providing full information on matters discussed. The Group had suggested that developed countries could do much to stimulate imports from developing countries through active import promotion and provision of assistance at the technical level, both directly to interested developing countries or through international agencies dealing with industrialization and marketing. Apart from the removal of trade barriers, a more active effort was required on the part of developed countries in helping developing countries in their search for new market outlets. The Group was convinced that there were opportunities for developing countries which could be pursued bilaterally. The recommendation that the secretariat should be equipped to provide special assistance to developing countries in the course of the multilateral trade negotiations had received a ready welcome on the part of developed countries. The Group believed that developing countries should make an effort at more effective utilization of the existing GATT machinery by paying closer attention to the work of different bodies of GATT and presenting their problems in a more specific form.
4. Members expressed appreciation for the work accomplished by the Group of Three. It was noted with satisfaction that some developed countries were taking practical steps to stimulate imports from developing countries and a reference was made to the

machinery for the promotion of imports from developing countries set up by the Netherlands. A member enquired what would be the reaction of the Group of Three to the possibility of its reports being discussed by the Informal Group before they are finalized. This would permit developing countries to have a fuller discussion on the implications of recommendations that the Group intended to make. Ambassador Archibald said that he would consult the other members of the Group of Three on the matter. The Group had considered very seriously the possibility of discussing its specific recommendations with both developing and developed countries before actually producing the report, but the time factor had not allowed this. The Group would, however, be very happy to meet developing countries to discuss the report.

5. In response to other questions, Mr. M.G. Mathur, Assistant Director-General, said that since the circulation of the report of the Group of Three there had been no notifications announcing further relaxation or elimination of quota restrictions on products covered by the Generalized System of Preferences. As regards the status of country studies, Mr. Mathur explained that, in order to make the studies of more practical and direct use to developing countries in the context of the multilateral trade negotiations, the secretariat thought it desirable to compile data in greater detail than originally proposed which would give not only the tariff averages and trade flows at the BTN-heading level but would, as far as possible, also provide trade, tariff and non-tariff barrier data down to the tariff-line level. The documentation in the revised format would be of a massive character; it would have to be compiled and supplied to developing countries one by one as requests were received. Partial compilations had already been completed in the case of a few developing countries and requests from others were being attended to. However, in principle, the secretariat would be in a position to start work on these tabulations as soon as tariff and trade data for all developed countries for 1970 become available in the near future.

#### Participation by developing countries in the trade negotiations

6. The Chairman informed the Group that a meeting of the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products was scheduled for 12-13 July to continue with the work on techniques and modalities for the multilateral trade negotiations. The secretariat had prepared a note on the implications of different negotiating techniques for the trade of developing countries which was to be issued shortly. The Working Group on Techniques and Modalities of the Agriculture Committee had already carried out a first discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of possible techniques with respect to import, export, and production as well as other general measures applied in agriculture. The Working Group would re-convene in the last week of July to conclude discussions on elements set out in COM.AG/W/77 and consider its report to the Agriculture Committee.

7. In response to a question as to when a common understanding would be reached on the ground rules or principles for the negotiations, Mr. Mathur said that at the present time the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products and the Agriculture Committee were engaged in discussing the relative advantages, disadvantages and the implications of different approaches to tariff negotiations in the field of

industry and agriculture. It had been agreed that the work should be completed before the next session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.<sup>1</sup> At the appropriate time a time-table for the next stage of putting all the elements together could be envisaged.

8. Observing that discussions on techniques and modalities for the negotiations were in progress in different bodies of GATT, several members emphasized that developing countries should have their views reflected in the present stage of work so that their interests could be taken care of when final decisions were taken. For this purpose, it was proposed that with the assistance of the secretariat and on the basis of different hypotheses already worked out, developing countries should try to consolidate their views in the Informal Group. The discussion might cover for instance the linear approach as opposed to a product-by-product approach, the question of non-reciprocity, and the question of compensation for the loss of benefits under the Generalized system of Preferences.

9. A number of delegations referred to difficulties of certain developing countries in following work of all the Committees and Sub-Groups and stressed the importance of developing countries having full information on developments in the preparatory work for the negotiations in the absence of which it was difficult for developing countries to take political decisions. In considering how this could be achieved it was suggested that a working party might be established to consult with the secretariat and report early in September. Alternatively, the secretariat might be requested to prepare a note setting out all that had been achieved in various bodies of GATT.

10. In order to assist developing countries in their preparations, the secretariat was asked to (i) expedite country studies; (ii) prepare a note on the implications for developing countries of the different techniques for negotiations in the agricultural sector; and (iii) facilitate participation of non-GATT developing countries in the preparatory work. A reference was also made to collaboration with UNCTAD.

11. In response to a number of questions, Mr. Mathur explained that the main points that had emerged as a result of recent activities in other GATT bodies were set out in COM.TD/W/166. Briefly, there were two types of non-tariff barriers - one in respect of which ad referendum solutions had already been prepared for transmission to governments, and the other for which work was still in progress with a view to elaborating acceptable solutions. At the next meeting of the Industrial Committee developing countries who, for one reason or another, had not found it possible to participate in the discussions, would have an opportunity to comment on their specific interests. The secretariat, for its part, would be ready to expand on any point and supply additional details which might be considered helpful. As to how the work of the Agriculture and Industrial Committee would be dovetailed and whether a Trade Negotiations Committee would be established for elaborating procedures, these were matters for discussion and decision when the time was ripe.

---

<sup>1</sup> See paragraph 2, COM.IND/19 and paragraph 2(g), COM.AG/24.

12. The suggestion that a paper be prepared on the implications of different negotiating techniques for the trade of developing countries in the agricultural sector had already been passed on to those responsible. It might be useful if the suggestion could also be made in the meetings of the Committee on Trade and Development and the Agriculture Committee.

13. In concluding the meeting, the Chairman informed the Informal Group that non-GATT developing countries had been notified of the existing facilities for their participation in the preparatory work for the negotiations (L/3718).