

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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Multilateral Trade Negotiations

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Trade Negotiations Committee

STATEMENT BY AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION MADE IN RESPONSE TO THE
SUGGESTION BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE AS SET OUT IN
DOCUMENT MTN/W/24

The statement by the Chairman strikes us as significant.

Does it mean we are moving along the bilateral path for agriculture as a whole?

We note your last point, that what you said relates to procedure only, and not to the differences of substance between delegations.

We are doubtful whether we should mark off the whole area of agricultural trade in a formal way by setting up procedures for bilateral consultations - all this quite separately from industrial trade.

In that sense we cannot associate ourselves with what you said when you observed that no government would be opposed to both multilateral and bilateral consultations in the agriculture group.

As the Australian Delegation has already stated in other meetings, we have reservations whether in the agricultural area the bilateral path would lead to the best results in terms of reciprocity and mutual advantage at the highest possible level of exchanges.

However, we have noted support from a number of delegations for the suggestions you have just given us, and without commitment at this stage we will need to consider the situation for the next meeting of the Group "Agriculture".