

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/3F/2
6 March 1974

Special Distribution

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

GROUP 3(f) - POINTS RELATING TO PROGRAMME OF WORK

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Group on Tropical Products (Group 3(f)) established by the Trade Negotiations Committee held its first meeting during the period 18-20 February 1974 under the chairmanship of Mr. M.G. Mathur, Deputy Director-General. The Group reached certain broad conclusions concerning its work programme over the coming months.
2. As a basis for discussion, the Group had before it a secretariat background note (MTN/3F/1).
3. The Group generally agreed that its work be so organized as to make it possible to take up work of an analytical nature on those items where sufficient statistical material is available, while statistical work is continued on other items with a view to undertaking analyses in due course.
4. In this connexion, it was noted that the most comprehensive background material at present available in the GATT documentation relating to tropical products is contained in COM.TD/W/189, which provides details of tariffs and non-tariff measures as well as trade flows for 1964, 1967 and 1970 for a number of important commodities entering international trade. The importance of each product in the trade of individual developing countries in respect of the above periods is also shown. To facilitate an examination of the export dependence of individual developing countries on tropical products, the secretariat will produce a comprehensive table for 1970. It was agreed that as far as additional information on prices, etc. is concerned, this will be collected for products listed in COM.TD/W/189 and COM.TD/W/205, to the extent that details are available.
5. The Group further agreed that the following information would be compiled:
 - (a) The material on tariffs (including the GSP) and non-tariff measures would be up-dated by the secretariat on the basis of information provided by delegations. Delegations may also notify additional non-tariff measures not so far identified in respect of the products listed in COM.TD/W/189 and COM.TD/W/205.
 - (b) Export information will be up-dated by a table showing, for major tropical products in COM.TD/W/189, the value and volume of exports, as well as the export unit value, of each exporting country, for the years 1967-1972.
Information

Information base on imports shown in COM.TD/W/189 will be up-dated to 1972 when the statistical details become available.

- (c) With respect to prices, the secretariat would compile statistics illustrating the development over the last decade of export prices of the main tropical products and compare these series with export prices indices for all primary products and for manufactured goods. These data, based on price quotations from commodity exchanges, would present the most up-to-date information, covering the whole of 1973 and possibly the early months of 1974. For other tropical products price quotations would also be collected for the last decade to the extent that detailed information is available on a comparable basis.
- (d) Details on per capita consumption will be provided in respect of the main products in the main consuming countries.

6. For the next meeting the secretariat will, in addition to the data outlined in paragraph 5 above, have for each group of commodities mentioned in COM.TD/W/189, a covering note concerning the main points emerging from the data. The note would, in addition to utilizing the material contained in relevant GATT documentation, refer also to any analyses of the situation relating to markets, prices, incidence of barriers etc., to be found in FAO, UNCTAD and other documentation on commodities subject to intergovernmental consultations.

7. The Group may be expected to review and analyze this material at its next meeting with the objective of arriving at a full diagnosis of the problems affecting the commodities in question. However, it will be open to the Group to consider whether, in relation to any specific commodities, further analytical work would be needed on particular aspects.

8. Taking into account the competence of the other groups, the secretariat will proceed with the collection of similar information, where available in the necessary breakdown and detail, along the lines outlined in paragraph 5 above for products covered in document COM.TD/W/205. To the extent that relevant and useful information is available, the secretariat would also put together information on projections for the main products listed in COM.TD/W/205. When these details have been compiled, the Group might wish to proceed to an analysis of the data at a later meeting.

9. In addition to taking up further items for the compilation of information which are listed in Annex I of MTN/3F/1, it would be open to delegations to suggest other items for inclusion in the work. Notifications from delegations will be circulated to members of the Group. The Group may, at a later stage, consider the type of analytical work which may be undertaken in respect of such items.

10. In collecting information on certain items and proceeding with the further work envisaged, it would be kept in mind that the requirements of information and how this analysis might be organized may need to be reviewed in the light of developments in other groups.

11. The secretariat would undertake the collection of available data on stocks and would contact other organizations with a view to securing information on stock-holding practices in relation to the major commodities included in the documentation before the Group.

12. As the work proceeds, the secretariat will endeavour to provide information on studies carried out on marketing and distribution systems relating to tropical products to the extent that this is available.

Date of next meeting

13. The Group agreed that its next meeting be scheduled for Monday, 22 April 1974.