

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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Multilateral Trade Negotiations

Group "Tropical Products"

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMING-UP AND RECORD OF DECISIONS  
AT MEETING OF 16-18 FEBRUARY 1976

1. The Group "Tropical Products" held its fourth meeting during the period 16-18 February 1976 to carry forward the negotiations on tropical products in accordance with the Guidelines agreed at its initial meeting (MTN/TP/1) and the decisions taken at the second and third meetings (MTN/TP/3 and MTN/TP/4). The Group agreed to invite the Secretary-General of UNCTAD or his representative to attend this meeting as an observer.

Review of consultations

2. A number of delegations provided information with respect to the consultations on the request lists for concessions which had taken place since the last meeting of the Group. It was noted that in the course of some of these consultations, preliminary substantive reactions to the requests had been provided. Some delegations said that they looked forward to receiving clarifications on certain points from some requesting countries, including more detailed information on non-tariff measures referred to in certain request lists.

3. Delegations from countries to which requests had been addressed indicated that the consultations had been useful in connexion with the preparation of initial offers which they expected to be able to table on 1 March 1976 as agreed in the previous meeting of the Group.

4. In the light of the consultations which had taken place, delegations from a number of requesting countries expressed concern that initial offers may be insufficient in terms of product coverage and depth of offer and that they may not adequately take account of problems of tariff escalation and non-tariff measures, solutions to which were an integral part of the objectives of the Tokyo Declaration as well as the Guidelines for organization of Negotiations on Tropical Products (MTN/TP/1). With respect to reciprocity, some of these delegations referred to paragraph 5 of the Tokyo Declaration and indicated that any contributions they would make consistent with their individual development, financial and trade needs, would be on the basis of the additional benefits they receive as a result of the overall negotiations taking into account the relevant provisions of the Tokyo Declaration as applied to developing countries.

5. Some delegations noted that the extent and scope of the actions to be taken by countries to which requests have been addressed in the field of tropical products would become clear only after the initial offers had been tabled. In this respect, delegations of requesting countries expressed the hope that offers would meet the commitment in the Tokyo Declaration to give tropical products special and priority treatment.

Circulation and format of offers, and further action

6. The Group had agreed that at this meeting it would take a decision on the circulation and the format of offers, and take up other matters mentioned in GATT/AIR/1257. In this connexion, it has agreed on the procedures outlined in the following paragraphs.

7. Countries having received request lists will present global initial offer lists for circulation to participants in the Group "Tropical Products".

8. Countries which are not in a position to do this at the outset will present initial offer lists to each requesting country adding information on items in which such a requesting country may have a trade interest even where these are not included in its request lists. The list will be transmitted through the secretariat or copies of each list deposited with the secretariat.

9. Any participant shall be entitled to obtain information directly or through the secretariat from an offer-making country on any item included in the lists of requests in which it considers it has an interest.

10. The offer lists will be presented subject to the requirements of confidentiality being respected with not more than two copies for each delegation.

11. The offers should include details covering the tariff item number, the product description, the duty rate or rates applicable to the item on which a concession is being offered and the concessions offered with respect to tariffs and non-tariff measures or other proposals for action.

12. The tabling of offers will be followed by a process of bilateral or plurilateral negotiations between the participants concerned. The secretariat will keep in touch with such negotiations. It will circulate by 15 May 1976 lists of offers made by all offer-making countries with a view to facilitating multilateral discussion or review.

13. The Group will meet in June 1976 to review the status of the offers having regard to the offer lists circulated by the secretariat and the bilateral or plurilateral negotiations that may have taken place, to examine any points

concerning the scope and contents of the offers which may be brought up by participants and to discuss arrangements for the finalization of concessions on tropical products having regard to the summing-up of December 1975 by the Chairman of the Trade Negotiations Committee.

14. At the June meeting, the Group will also revert to points covered by Sections 1(v), 1(ix) and 2(iii) of the Guidelines (MTN/TP/1).