

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/TP/12

30 October 1978

Special Distribution

---

## Multilateral Trade Negotiations

### Group "Tropical Products"

#### MEETING OF 23-24 OCTOBER 1978

##### Summing-up by the Chairman

1. The Group held its eighth meeting on 23-24 October 1978.
2. The Group invited the Secretary-General of UNCTAD or his representative to attend the meeting as an observer.
3. In the light of its agenda (GATT/AIR/1501), the Group focussed attention on two points - review of developments in the negotiations on tropical products with a view to assessing overall progress in the area and the question of how further progress can be made on tropical products within the context of the multilateral trade negotiations. There was also an exchange of views on the status of m.f.n. concessions and the situation of contributions which had been made as well as on certain points covered by the Guidelines for Organization of Negotiations on Tropical Products (MTN/TP/1), specifically sections 1(v) and 2(iii) of that document. Included in the background material, was document MTN/TP(SECRET)2/Rev.3, providing an overall picture of the stage reached as of mid-August 1978 with respect to requests submitted in the framework of tropical products on the basis of information available to the secretariat.
4. Many delegations of developing countries expressed their disappointment at the inadequate progress made in this area of the negotiations and at the lack of results in the consultations which had taken place including those within the framework of the procedures adopted for Groups "Non-Tariff Measures" and "Agriculture" as well as in connexion with negotiations on tariffs. Mention was made of a number of specific products on which there had been no satisfactory offers. In this respect reference was made to the level of trade involved.
5. A number of delegations of developing countries also referred to the non-implementation by a major importing country of its offer on tropical products. In this connexion, some of these delegations recalled the procedures adopted in the Groups "Agriculture" and "Non-Tariff Measures" in terms of which developing countries had undertaken to make global contributions in the light of the

additional benefits they receive from the negotiations as a whole and not on a sectoral basis. The spokesman for a group of developing countries drew attention to a global statement of contributions to the MTN which had been made on behalf of that group of countries in the overall context of the negotiations including the Group "Tropical Products".

6. Delegations of some offer-making countries recalled the concessions and contributions which had already been implemented or were on the table as a result of the negotiations in the framework of the Group "Tropical Products" and drew attention to the significant additional offers which had been tabled in response to tropical products requests in the negotiations on agriculture, tariffs and non-tariff measures. These delegations indicated that the concessions and offers made by their authorities should also be seen in relation to the very high degree of trade liberalization they had previously achieved on tropical products. Some participants indicated that the question of further improvements in existing offers on tropical products would continue to be under the consideration of their authorities having regard to overall developments in the negotiations. The representative of one offer-making country in reiterating that the general position of his country with respect to the implementation of offers remained unchanged, stated that his country had been able to arrive at mutually satisfactory negotiated solutions with certain trading partners when it had also been possible to improve and implement some of the initial offers. His delegation remained ready to pursue such possibilities with participants which had addressed requests on tropical products to his country.

7. In recalling the provisions of paragraph 6 of the Tokyo Declaration relating to the need to ensure special treatment for the least-developed countries, some representatives of these countries expressed their concern at the lack of progress with respect to this paragraph and stated that reciprocal contributions should not be expected from the least-developed countries.

8. The Group had an exchange of views on the legal status of concessions and contributions on tropical products. It was noted that some delegations had already indicated the readiness of their authorities to bind their m.f.n. concessions on tropical products at the conclusion of the negotiations.

9. The Group recalled the special and priority character given to the sector of tropical products in the Tokyo Declaration and noted the crucial importance attached by developing countries to the attainment of meaningful results in negotiations in this area for the outcome of the MTN as a whole.

10. The Group exchanged views on how further progress might be made during the remaining stages of the negotiations towards maximizing results with respect to requests on tropical products to the advantage of all participants. The Group noted that bilateral and plurilateral negotiations between interested countries would need to be intensified in the coming weeks with a view to clarifying outstanding issues and seeking improvements in existing offers. In this respect, reference was made in particular to the need to pursue plurilateral negotiations on specific tropical products of significant importance between those developing countries having a trade interest and the developed country or countries concerned.

11. The Group noted that secretariat assistance would be available as required in connexion with arrangements for the organization of plurilateral consultations and negotiations and that delegations of developing countries could seek the services of the secretariat for such technical analyses or data as the secretariat may be in a position to provide. The question of the further work that the secretariat could do by way of assisting delegations arrive at an overall appreciation of the results of negotiations in the area of tropical products would be considered in due course. In the meantime, the secretariat would continue to update MTN/TP(SECRET)2 as information became available.

12. The Group will review the situation with respect to negotiations on tropical products at its next meeting. The date of the meeting will be fixed by the Chairman in consultation with delegations and the secretariat.