

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/TP/W/9
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Limited Distribution

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

Group "Tropical Products"

STATUS OF INITIAL REQUESTS FOR CONCESSIONS

Note by the Secretariat

1. The guidelines for the organization of negotiations on tropical products (MTN/TP/1) state, in paragraph 1(iv), that at its June meeting the Group shall, inter alia, review the status of initial requests for concessions on tropical products. In the following paragraphs, the secretariat has attempted to present an aggregate picture of the position regarding request lists submitted for circulation to participating countries up to the end of May 1975. In this respect, it will be recalled that the guidelines state that participating countries would submit their initial requests for concessions to the participants concerned by 16 May 1975, it being understood that those unable to meet this date would submit their requests as soon as possible thereafter.
2. By 4 June the following countries had submitted initial request lists for concessions: Argentina, Brazil, Ghana, India, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines). The request lists from Argentina, Jamaica and Kenya were received after the short analysis contained in the following paragraphs was taken in hand and are therefore not included. If found useful by the Group, this analysis will be supplemented in due course.
3. In presenting these lists the countries concerned generally stated that they were initial in character and could be subject to addition or amendment. Furthermore, it has been indicated in some cases that initial request lists may be submitted to other participants where this has not so far been done.
4. Initial request lists have been addressed to the following participants: Australia, Austria, Canada, EEC, Finland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States - eleven in all.
5. In four cases, requests for concessions have been submitted to the eleven participants mentioned above, in two cases requests have been submitted to ten participants, in one case to nine, in two cases to eight and in two cases to six.

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6. The lists include a broad coverage of items in their raw, semi-processed and processed forms produced and exported by the countries requesting concessions. They range from Chapter 1 of the BTN (certain live animals) to Chapter 94 (certain wood products). At the tariff line level, requests for concessions cover approximately 300 items.

7. While it is not possible to be exhaustive in this connexion, it would seem that the following items, in particular, have been included in most request lists: fish and fish products (including crustaceans and molluscs), the beverage crops (coffee, cocoa, tea, in their raw, semi-processed and processed forms), fruit and vegetables (fresh and processed), vegetable oils, spices, cut flowers, etc., tobacco and tobacco products, rubber products, leather and leather products, wood and wood products and certain fibres and fibre products.

8. In the field of tariffs, approximately 1,700 requests for concessions have been submitted of which some 800 are concerned with requests for the reduction or elimination of most-favoured-nation tariffs and over 200 related to the inclusion of the product in the GSP. A significant number of requests are unspecified as to the type of concession being sought. Two countries have requested, however, that in certain instances commonwealth preferences be continued. In this respect, one country has asked for the binding of the margin of preference for certain items. One other country has requested that certain tariff concessions being sought be bound in a special preferential schedule for developing countries.

9. Requests for concessions covering a wide range of non-tariff measures have also been submitted. It would appear that predominant among these are requests (over 200) in respect of internal taxes, mostly selective, but in some cases covering also internal taxes of general application. The number of requests submitted in relation to import restrictions (about 160) and health and sanitary regulations and packaging and labelling (about 140) also reflect the importance that certain requesting participants see in achieving appropriate action in these areas.

10. One country has also indicated that its request with respect to measures to be taken for the attainment of stable, equitable and remunerative prices would be submitted in due course.

11. It is understood that some consultations have been taking place in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(ii) of the guidelines, with respect to the request lists for purposes of clarification, etc. between participants making requests and the participants to which requests have been addressed.

12. According to information made available to the secretariat, a number of other developing countries are likely to be submitting request lists to developed country participants in the near future. These countries may wish to inform the Group "Tropical Products" when such lists may be presented.