

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/NTM/W/237

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Multilateral Trade Negotiations

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Group "Non-Tariff Measures"

Sub-Group "Quantitative Restrictions"

QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTIONS

Statement Made by the Australian Delegation at the April 1979 Meeting of the Sub-Group "Quantitative Restrictions"

Delegations will be aware of the strong emphasis Australia has placed on the need for a multilateral search for solutions to problems relating to quantitative import restrictions. We have been particularly concerned about those quantitative restrictions that are maintained inconsistently with the rules and principles of the GATT.

It has been our view that unless the problem was adequately dealt with in the MTN, doubt would be cast upon the meaning and purpose of the GATT as an effective instrument in regulating trade.

Australia has always believed that it would be appropriate in this round of negotiations to draw up a multilateral programme providing for the progressive dismantling of restrictions which are inconsistent with GATT rules. Delegations will recall that Australia has put forward some ideas on a general framework for such a plan. These are contained in MTN/NTM/W/106. We thought, and continue to think, that such a plan would be realistic and manageable.

This proposal was not acceptable and negotiations on quantitative restrictions have proceeded along a different track - a request/offer, item-by-item approach. The results as far as Australia has been concerned have been limited. Notwithstanding the results of such negotiations, we continue to hold to the view that the establishment of a multilateral framework of rules for the programmed removal of quantitative import restrictions would be an important contribution to the orderly development of the international trading system. Such a solution is unlikely to be obtainable in the remaining days of these negotiations. Nevertheless we hope this will not deter CONTRACTING PARTIES from renewing efforts to come to grips with this problem in the post-Tokyo Round situation.

To this end the Australian delegation proposes that in the appropriate way the Quantitative Restrictions Sub-Group recommends to the Contracting Parties that they develop a multilateral solution in the field of quantitative import restrictions. The CONTRACTING PARTIES should be requested to address themselves to this task as one of the priority issues to be taken up after the MTN are concluded.