

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/AG/W/39

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Special Distribution

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Multilateral Trade Negotiations

Group "Agriculture"

FORMAT AND TRANSMITTAL OF INITIAL OFFERS

Note by the Secretariat

1. At its meeting of July 1977, Group "Agriculture" agreed on decisions regarding the further conduct of negotiations on agricultural products (MTN/AG/7, paragraph 6(a) and Annex). In particular, the Group accepted 15 January 1978 for the submission of offers and agreed that a maximum effort should be made by all participants in this regard. The present note puts forward organizational suggestions aimed at facilitating the process of submission and transmittal of initial offers. The suggestions are based on the procedures followed in the negotiations in Group "Tropical Products", which are briefly summarized below.

Procedures regarding offers followed in Group "Tropical Products"

2. According to the procedures agreed in Group "Tropical Products" (MTN/TP/5, paragraphs 6 to 13) countries having received request lists presented global initial offer lists for circulation to participants in the Group. Countries not in a position to do so at the outset presented initial offer lists to each requesting country, adding information on items in which such a requesting participant may have a trade interest; such lists were presented either through the secretariat or directly, with a copy of each list being deposited with the secretariat. Any participant was entitled to obtain information directly or through the secretariat from an offer-making country on any item included on the request lists in which it considered it had an interest. Because of requirement of confidentiality, not more than two copies of the offer lists were presented to each delegation.

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

Proposed procedures regarding offers in Group "Agriculture"

4. In order to facilitate the preparation of initial offers and their transmittal by participants, it is suggested that the procedures below be used as regards initial offers on agricultural products. The suggestions in no way modify or otherwise affect the decisions in MTN/AG/7. They do not commit any delegation and are without prejudice to any procedural or other matter which the Group might wish to discuss and decide upon in due course.

(a) Format

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. Where relevant, the participant to which the offer is made should be specified. To the extent possible, a format similar to that proposed for request lists in MTN/AG/W/28/Rev.1 should be followed. Delegations might also wish to include, if they deem necessary and appropriate, remarks of a general or specific nature related to their offer list.

(b) Confidentiality and transparency

- (i) The offer lists will be presented subject to the requirements of confidentiality being respected, with not more than two copies for each delegation. All copies (whether transmitted through the secretariat or directly) should be stamped "secret", numbered and handed to delegations against a formal receipt (or transmitted by registered mail where necessary).
- (ii) Participants in a position to submit global initial offer lists should provide 210 copies to the secretariat for transmittal to participants in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations, including two copies for retention by the secretariat.
- (iii) Participants submitting initial offer lists to each requesting participant concerned through the secretariat should indicate the participants to which the initial offer lists should be transmitted and provide the required number of copies for this purpose including two copies for retention by the secretariat.

- (iv) Participants submitting initial offer lists directly to each participant concerned will deposit two copies of each such list with the secretariat.
- (v) Copies of offer lists submitted in accordance with (iii) and (iv) above would normally be made available to other participants, either directly or through the secretariat, and in any event any participant shall be entitled to obtain information directly or through the secretariat from an offer-making participant on any item included in the lists of requests in which it considers it has an interest.
- (vi) Initial offer lists sent to the secretariat should be addressed to Mr. Lindén.