

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/FR/W/22

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## STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AUSTRALIA

The following statement is circulated at the request of the delegation of Australia.

Australia's views on the proposed Understanding Regarding Export Restrictions and Charges are well known and it is assumed well understood.

Australia believes that its reputation as a reliable and assured supplier of commodities is sound. The Australian Government has always been and remains ready to consult with its trading partners on any matter concerning the supply of commodities from Australia.

From the outset of the discussion on this issue in the MTN the Australian delegation has invited those participants who have been in favour of modifying GATT rules and procedures on this question to specifically identify genuine trading problems in the area of export restrictions and charges which would justify such changes. However no convincing arguments have been put forth to show that the rules and procedures are deficient.

It has also been fundamental to Australia's position that any examination of export control measures should be carried out in parallel with an examination of existing GATT disciplines relating to access to markets and the extent to which these disciplines are observed.

As has been pointed out by the Canadian delegation in document MTN/FR/W/21, the proposed Understanding Regarding Export Restrictions and Charges involves acceptance of no new obligations additional to those already contained in the GATT.

Australia has sought in the MTN to come to grips with a range of import control devices including illegal quantitative restrictions, which clearly distort and constrain world trade. The Australian delegation has made constructive proposals as to how these might be dealt with. There has been no response to these proposals. Raw material consuming countries have not been prepared to enter into meaningful negotiations with regard to import restrictions.

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The proposed Understanding Regarding Export Restrictions, despite its apparent modesty, will be one-sided and unbalanced unless, consistent with the words of the Understanding, the reassessment contemplated does "in the context of the international trading system as a whole" take up at the same time as it examines the issue of access to supplies the intimately linked question of access to markets. Clearly if the project contemplated is to be productive, both sides of the equation will have to be encompassed. The Australian Government will wish to bear these aspects in mind when it is considering the basis of its participation in the proposed reassessment agreed to in the Understanding.