

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

RESTRICTED

MTN.GNG/4

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Special Distribution

Group of Negotiations on Goods (GATT)

GROUP OF NEGOTIATIONS ON GOODS

Fourth Meeting: 5, 9 and 11 December 1986

1. At this meeting, the Group of Negotiations on Goods discussed the elaboration of detailed trade negotiating plans. In inviting comments on the informal papers prepared by the secretariat containing draft negotiating plans for each item in Sections D and E of the Ministerial Declaration, and on the short introductory text, the Chairman reminded the Group that the negotiations would be a continuously developing process and that the negotiating plans could not for this reason be regarded as immutable. Nor could they prejudice the substantive positions of any participant in the negotiations.

2. Regarding the purpose of the introductory text, it was noted that these paragraphs dealt, *inter alia*, with the rôle of the GNG. In this respect, several delegations referred to the papers dealing with this subject which had been submitted by the delegations of Jamaica (MTN.GNG/W/2) and Egypt (MTN.GNG/W/5). The Chairman added that some elements of the role of the GNG would be taken up in relation to the agreement on the establishment of negotiating groups.

3. In discussion of the implications for the negotiating plans of the central coordinating function of the GNG, as stated in sections G(i) and (v) of the Ministerial Declaration, different views were expressed on the balance to be struck between the need for coordination in further elaboration of the plans and the degree of flexibility needed by the negotiating groups to enable them to respond to changing circumstances. Some delegations believed that to ensure the coherence of the negotiations, the GNG should approve any modifications of the negotiating plans. On the other hand, other delegations believed that flexibility in response to new developments and opportunities would be crucial to successful negotiations and that the negotiating groups should be able to adjust their negotiating plans without requiring formal approval of the GNG. It was suggested that the negotiating groups should inform the GNG of any modification to the original plans and that any disagreement within a negotiating group concerning a modification should be referred to the GNG for resolution.

4. A number of delegations suggested that specific reference to certain of the General Principles Governing Negotiations (Section B) and the Organization of the Negotiations (Section G) should be included in the introductory text. The point was also made, however, that the Ministerial Declaration taken as a whole was a balanced agreement and that it would be inappropriate or superfluous for particular elements of it to be singled out, whether in the introductory text or in individual plans.

5. One delegation proposed amendments to a number of negotiating plans to provide for the elaboration of techniques and modalities for the quantification of the application of GATT provisions on special and differential treatment for developing countries in situations where concessions were exchanged between developed and developing contracting parties. It was suggested that if special reference to the treatment of developing countries were to be made, it might be preferable to do so in the introductory text, in general terms, rather than in individual negotiating plans.

6. Recalling the very heavy schedule of meetings which took place during the first year of the Tokyo Round, it was suggested that it would be useful to have an indicative calendar of meetings for 1987 to ensure a feasible schedule. The Chairman said that the secretariat would attempt to prepare such an indicative calendar, but pointed out that it would be difficult to propose a meaningful schedule of meetings until it was known what negotiating groups would be established.

7. In discussion of the individual negotiating plans, several delegations made the point that they could only be agreed as a package. A number of additions and amendments to the draft texts were proposed by delegations and considered by the GNG. It was agreed that the format of the plans should be made uniform wherever possible. It was suggested that target dates for completion should only be included for the initial phases of the plans.