

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

RESTRICTED

MTN.GNG/NG6/TI/2/Add.1

13 June 1988

Special Distribution

Group of Negotiations on Goods (GATT)

Original: English

Negotiating Group on Tropical Products

RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The attached communication received from the delegation of Hong-Kong in response to the requests for additional trade information addressed by the EEC (MTN.GNG/NG6/TI/2) is circulated to the members of the Group.

Hong Kong's Response to EEC Request for information
dated 5 April 1988

The following provides information on the commercial policy (tariffs and non-tariff measures) in Hong Kong for the seven tropical product groups (tropical beverage items; spices, flowers, plants etc; certain oilseeds, vegetable oils and oilcakes; tobacco, rice and tropical roots; tropical fruits and nuts; tropical wood and rubber; jute and hard fibres).

(a) Tariff Measures

2. Hong Kong maintains no import tariffs and, as a result of concessions accepted in the Geneva Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations (1956), has bounded duty at zero rate in respect of the following products:

- meal and flour of wheat and spelt
- citrus fruits (fresh), other than oranges tangerines and mandarines
- grapes (fresh)
- cotton seed oil

(b) Non-Tariff Measures

3. Hong Kong's import controls are kept to a minimum. The few existing measures have stemmed from Hong Kong's obligations under international undertakings, or are applied for health, safety or security reasons.

4. For the seven tropical product groups in question, except for rice (see paragraphs 6-7 below) no import control is maintained if the products are imported for consumption or for industrial use. However if the products are imported for planting purposes, control is maintained to prevent the introduction and spread of plant/soil pests. For the latter, importation into Hong Kong would need to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the country of origin, and a plant import licence issued by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. The import licence is issued automatically and free of charge.

5. In respect of the products in question, excise duty is imposed only on manufactured tobacco and related products. The excise duty is levied for revenue purposes and applies at the same rate for imported as well as for locally-manufactured products.

6. Rice is a staple food in Hong Kong. Importation of rice for local consumption is subject to a control scheme to ensure regular and adequate supply at stable prices and to provide a reserve stock for emergency purposes. The scheme stipulates the level of quarterly import quota which is calculated on the basis of demand and consumption pattern in the previous quarter.

7. Under the scheme only registered importers may import rice. To be eligible for registration, importer has to meet certain requirements e.g. demonstrated past import ability; established connections with overseas suppliers; sufficient financial resources to hold stock etc. These requirements are maintained to ensure that the importer has the capability and resources to deal with rice trading and stock-keeping. Import licences for registered importers are granted automatically. There is no restriction on the sourcing of rice supply. In 1987, 345,600 tonnes of rice was imported for local consumption.