

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

RESTRICTED

MTN.GNG/NG1/22

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Group of Negotiations on Goods (GATT)

Negotiating Group on Tariffs

MEETING OF 19 SEPTEMBER 1990

Note by the Secretariat

1. The meeting was convened by GATT/AIR/3080 of 4 September 1990 and chaired by H.E. Mr. L. Duthie. The Group adopted the following agenda:

- (A) Stock-taking of the situation concerning the submission of tariff proposals.
- (B) Status of review and assessment of tariff proposals.
- (C) Other business.

Present situation regarding the submission of proposals

2. The Chairman referred to document NG1/W/36/Rev.4 and noted that to date, forty-five tariff proposals had been received, which either had been or were being distributed according to the Procedures for the Negotiations adopted by the Group on 30 January 1990. He told the Group that since the last meeting, four new proposals had been submitted and that in addition a revised proposal had been circulated to all participants. In this context, he reminded the Group of the statement made by the Chairman of the TNC on July 1990 (document MTN/TNC/16, page 19): "The process of tabling specific tariff and non-tariff offers on all product sectors must be completed by 15 October 1990". He then invited delegations who intended to submit revised or improved proposals in the near future to indicate this to the Group.

3. Several participants expressed their governments' intention to submit improved tariff proposals and described these improvements as consisting mainly of increased product coverage.

4. One participant said that his country's improved tariff proposal was part of a whole market access liberalization scheme under consideration by his authorities and that its implementation would result in a greater harmonization of his country's tariffs. He pointed out that this offer would take into account results reached in the other negotiating groups, particularly in the Negotiating Group on Agriculture. He reminded the Group that his country's proposal should be considered in the context of the relevant paragraphs of the Punta Del Este Declaration and the Mid-Term Review Agreement which dealt with developing countries.

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5. Another participant stated that in addition to the improved proposal that was to be put forward in this Group, his government intended to present a proposal to the Negotiating Group on Agriculture. He requested the secretariat to take note of the contributions made by his authorities in the latter group when preparing the review and assessment study of his country's concessions in the market access group negotiations.

6. While he was encouraged to see that several delegations aimed to submit improved proposals, one participant felt that the pace of the negotiations would have to accelerate if the TNC objective of tabling substantial and specific offers by 15 October was to be met. In his view this goal could only be achieved if delegations adopted a more flexible negotiating approach. He hoped that others would follow the example set by his government and ameliorate substantially their proposals by making significant concessions in all product sectors. At the same time he wished to make it clear that his country's proposal remained conditional and that its implementation was subject to concessions made by other participants in areas of trade interest to his country. He stressed the fact that his country's revised proposal could be further improved but only on a reciprocal basis.

Review and assessment of the proposals

7. The Chairman reported that a total of five meetings had been held to review and assess the available proposals. Thirty-two out of the forty-five proposals so far received had been examined. He referred to document IDB/INF/1/Rev.16 which gave information on the situation of the submission of tariff and trade data and explained that due to either the late submission of proposals or the lack of tariff and/or trade data, not all the proposals had been analysed. He also informed the Group that two delegations had recently provided these data to the secretariat and that this fact would be reflected in the next revision of document IDB/INF/1.

Submission of tariff request lists by participants

8. The Chairman recalled that in the Procedures for the Negotiations (MTN.GNG/NG1/17), it was stipulated that participants were expected to submit preliminary request lists for improvements of the submitted proposals. This procedure was supposed to allow participants to enter into bilateral negotiations as soon as possible. He noted that to date the secretariat had received tariff requests from about twenty-four countries. He urged those countries having submitted requests to provide the secretariat with copies of those requests, as foreseen in the Procedures for the Negotiations.

Other Business

9. One delegate conveyed to the Group his government's negotiating schedule for the time remaining until the Brussels Conference. His authorities had decided to stop all bilateral negotiations for the first two weeks of October to allow for the preparation of the necessary documents for 15 October. Negotiations would then continue for another

month in order to address any last-minute issues and to enable participants to conclude final mutually satisfactory packages. He expressed disappointment at the fact that several negotiators would be unavailable for bilateral consultations during the crucial two weeks which remained before 1 October. However, he welcomed the announcements made by some delegations of their intention to submit improved proposals and urged other delegations to do the same. He reiterated the need to speed up the negotiations so as to meet the deadlines fixed by the TNC.

10. Another delegate read a statement, to be circulated as document MTN.GNG/NG1/W/46, and informed the Group that his government intended to remove from its initial offer all agricultural products, and deal with these items in the Negotiating Group on Agriculture. According to him this constituted merely a transfer and did not signify an exclusion of these products from the negotiations. In fact, he reminded the Group that in document MTN.GNG/NG5/W/177, his government had communicated its interest in reducing the tariffs for the various categories of agricultural products by an amount equal or greater than the target mentioned in the Mid-Term Review text for the tariff negotiations. He continued to be of the opinion that to achieve the objectives set out in the Mid-Term Review Agreement, a formula approach was required which could be applied on a multilateral basis and without any discrimination among product sectors.

11. One delegate raised the question of the format of the document to be prepared for the Brussels Conference and suggested the use of a computer generated document. This document, in his view, would be provisional and could be completed subsequent to the conference. Another delegate pointed out that a discussion on the format of the final protocol might be a bit premature as the results obtained in other negotiating groups could also have a bearing on this format. However, the idea of a preliminary or interim document for use at the Brussels Conference appeared to be a good one.

12. A query was made regarding the staging and implementation of the concessions.

13. The Chairman shared the concerns voiced by some delegations regarding the pace at which the negotiations were moving and urged participants to speed up the process. He also felt that the point relating to the structure of the document to be prepared for the Brussels Conference, was a salient one and suggested that this issue appear as an item on the agenda for the next meeting. He requested delegations to put forward suggestions regarding this question and the secretariat to produce a technical note reflecting its opinion on this subject for the next meeting. As to the query concerning the staging and the implementation of the concessions, he replied that a discussion on this matter could take place at the joint meeting of the market access groups, which would be held on 21 September 1990.

Date of next meeting

14. The Group agreed that the next meeting would be held during the week starting 22 October 1990.