

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Group of Negotiations on Goods (GATT)

Negotiating Group on Market Access

MEETING OF 12 MARCH 1992

Note by the Secretariat

1. The eighth meeting of the Negotiating Group on Market Access was convened by GATT/AIR/3302 of 9 March 1992 and chaired by Mr. G. Denis. The Group adopted the following agenda:

- (a) Comments by participants on their draft Schedules of concessions and commitments;
- (b) General review of the state of the submission of draft Schedules;
- (c) State of the Secretariat's evaluation of market access Schedules;
- (d) Other business.

2. The Chairman proposed to take up under the agenda item "Other business", the question of the date of the next meeting.

- (a) Comments by participants on their draft Schedules of concessions and commitments

3. The Chairman recalled that at the market access meeting of 5 March 1992, some fifty-one participants had indicated that they had either already done so or were intending to table their submissions within the shortest possible delay. To date, eighteen submissions had been received. Certain delegations had submitted comprehensive line-by-line draft Schedules on agricultural and non-agricultural products; others had provided such Schedules only with respect to one of these two areas; others had submitted Schedules on agricultural products, but only qualitative assessments as concerned non-agricultural products on the basis that the detailed line-by-line industrial Schedules would be submitted at an early date when the state of their bilateral negotiations could be better reflected.

4. While recognizing the intensive work that was being undertaken by delegations to put together the necessary material for comprehensive submissions, it was also important to note that the earlier all the submissions of full line-by-line draft Schedules were completed, the more likely the Group would be in a position to conclude the market access negotiations on time.

5. The Group heard statements by various delegations on the current situation regarding the submission of their draft Schedules. Some participants stated that their authorities had already submitted or intended to submit comprehensive draft Schedules in accordance with the procedures and modalities set out in the Draft Final Act. Delays in the submission of these comprehensive draft Schedules were attributed to the technical complexity of the work involved, especially with respect to the preparation of the lists of specific commitments concerning the agriculture reform programme.

6. A certain number of participants informed the Group that with respect to industrial products, their authorities intended to either submit detailed improved line-by-line offers which in some cases went beyond the Montreal target, or confirm the initial and/or revised offer made in 1990, or submit a qualitative assessment on the state of the negotiations. With respect to agricultural products, some participants stated that their draft Schedules would contain either detailed tables concerning the areas of market access, internal support and export commitments, or only the basic data.

7. Participants who had submitted draft Schedules in either agricultural or non-agricultural products only, stated that it had not been possible to submit comprehensive draft Schedules at this stage of the negotiations due to the fact that either key bilateral negotiations with their main trading partners were still underway, or they were waiting for other major participants' offers. In some cases the unresolved broader substantive political issues, or the uncertainty surrounding the negotiations in certain product areas had also prevented the tabling of comprehensive draft Schedules. A few participants emphasized the importance of achieving balanced results in the area of fish and fishery products. One participant said that while the present state of sectoral negotiations did not justify the inclusion of such results in his country's draft Schedule, the inclusion of results pertaining to harmonization in the chemicals sector was envisaged.

8. Many participants emphasized that their draft Schedules were conditional and could be revised in the light of results reached in the market access area.

b) General review of the state of the submission of draft Schedules

9. The Chairman invited participants to provide their preliminary substantive reactions to the comments made under agenda item one and to the state of market access submissions in general. He added that this should take into account the understanding that access to the substantive elements of submissions should be on a reciprocal basis only.

10. Many participants expressed disappointment at the fact that a number of participants had either submitted non-comprehensive draft Schedules, or had not as yet submitted any such documentation. Concern was also voiced at the quality of some of the submissions made. In this regard and with

respect to agricultural draft Schedules, it was pointed out that some of the submissions were not in conformity with the provisions of the Draft Final Act. According to one participant, the variation in quality among the different submissions could be attributed to the fact that the agricultural text contained in the Draft Final Act was a Chairman's compromise and not a negotiated agreement. The point was also made that the absence of detailed line-by-line submissions on industrial products made the necessary evaluation and balancing of concessions difficult.

11. Participants still engaged in bilateral or sectoral negotiations were urged to conclude their discussions as soon as possible so that the process could move forward. However, a number of participants expressed doubts as to whether the original timetable elaborated for the concluding stages of the market access negotiations could still be met in view of the present state of submissions.

12. The Chairman noted that submissions were continuing to be made, although there had been certain delays. However, the quality of the draft Schedules still needed to be improved so that the basis for the final decisions could be established. While he could understand the concerns expressed regarding the prospects of meeting the established time-frames, he felt that it was too early to make any kind of judgement on this matter.

c) State of the Secretariat's evaluation of market access Schedules

13. The Chairman stated that the Schedules of concessions and commitments received thus far varied in terms of coverage and detail. Eighteen participants had submitted information to the Secretariat. Of these, eight participants had submitted comprehensive line-by-line draft Schedules covering agricultural and non-agricultural products; another three had tabled comprehensive draft Schedules which in addition to agriculture, covered non-agricultural products in a qualitative assessment; seven other participants had submitted not fully comprehensive Schedules.

14. While the Secretariat had started work on the data provided so far, the information received was not complete enough to permit a meaningful overall review and assessment of the offers made. He added that the evaluation exercise could only proceed in line with the submissions tabled. In order to make the exercise meaningful, there had to be a representative number of contributions in the agreed format. Furthermore, since only a few participants had submitted their detailed Schedules on diskette as requested, information that had not been submitted in that manner needed to be entered manually and verified line-by-line. He pointed out that manual processing was extremely time-consuming, and all participants were urged to provide their data on diskette. He informed the Group that it would take approximately one week to produce the overall review and assessment from the time that the line-by-line information had been received on diskette. A further point to be considered was that if the tables foreseen under the evaluation exercise were to be circulated now, those participants who had already made their submissions would be put at a disadvantage vis-a-vis those who had not.

15. He expressed concern about the difficulty of moving ahead expeditiously on the important evaluation exercise, particularly in view of the need to allow further adjustments to be made to individual submissions in the light of that evaluation.

16. The Group **agreed** to revert to this matter at the next meeting.

d) Other business

- Date of next meeting

17. The Group **agreed** that the next meeting of the Group would take place on 19 March 1992.