

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

RESTRICTED

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Group of Negotiations on Goods (GATT)

Negotiating Group on Market Access

MEETING OF 26 MARCH

Note by the Secretariat

1. The ninth meeting of the Negotiating Group on Market Access was convened by GATT/AIR/3307 of 18 March 1992 and chaired by Mr. G. Denis. The Group adopted the following agenda:

- (a) State of the submission of draft Schedules;
- (b) State of the Secretariat's evaluation of market access Schedules;
- (c) Other business.

a) State of the submission of draft Schedules

2. The Chairman indicated that since the last meeting of the Group, thirty participants had submitted draft Schedules of commitments or concessions. In addition, seventeen other delegations had stated that they intended to submit draft Schedules as early as possible. A list of participants that had submitted draft Schedules or had indicated their intention to do so was circulated.

3. Two participants reported that they were carrying out intensive negotiations at the highest levels with a view to resolving the remaining problems and achieving substantial results.

4. One participant said that he was not encouraged by the number of draft Schedules submitted to date, especially in light of the total number of participants in the Uruguay Round. Moreover, some of the draft Schedules tabled by the major trading partners contained gaps and did not conform to the provisions of the Draft Final Act. Also, several participants had provided only qualitative assessments on non-agricultural products which, in his view, did not provide a sufficient basis for further bilateral negotiations. He also expressed concern at the fact that major trading partners had so far failed to resolve their problems in their bilateral negotiations and their non-compliance with the agreed timetable had had serious consequences. Other participants in the Round had tabled industrial offers but nothing on agriculture; some others had submitted detailed tables on agricultural products but only qualitative assessments on industrial products or, in a number of cases, not more than short statements on ceiling bindings; moreover, a large number of participants had not submitted any schedules. He added that a clear statement by major

participants about their intentions concerning the tabling of complete Schedules would be conducive to stimulating the final phase in the access negotiations.

5. Several participants who had submitted comprehensive Schedules agreed with the above statement and emphasized their concern about the qualitative content of certain draft Schedules that had been submitted. They expressed their disappointment and frustration over the lack of concrete results at this late stage of the negotiations, especially on the part of certain key participants. One participant added that the credibility of the whole process was at stake.

6. A number of participants stated that they were working intensively on the preparation of their draft Schedules and were expecting to submit these very shortly. Some participants explained that technical difficulties, especially in relation to the preparation of the lists of agricultural commitments, had delayed the submission of their comprehensive Schedules.

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

7. The Chairman pointed out that it appeared that the situation had not changed much since the last meeting, and that the submissions made to date did not provide sufficient data to carry out a meaningful evaluation exercise.

c) Other business

- Conclusion

8. In his concluding remarks, the Chairman noted that considerable efforts had been made by participants which were evident from the number of submissions made. Some participants had indicated that they were trying hard to solve their differences. He expressed serious concern at the market access process in general and felt that progress was being impeded by a number of major factors including: (1) the absence of a number of complete draft Schedules of concessions and commitments on agriculture and the existence of major gaps in a number of submissions in the light of the Final Act; (2) the absence of line-by-line draft Schedules of concessions on non-agricultural products particularly on the part of major participants; (3) the unsuccessful attempts to produce political breakthroughs in a number of major bilateral market access negotiations; (4) doubts about the appropriate balance between the bilateral and the multilateral aspects of the negotiating process; (5) the continuing absence of adequate data for the Secretariat to carry out a meaningful evaluation of the emerging market access results. He considered it disappointing that the work of the Group was falling behind schedule and that the momentum needed to have a market access deal was still missing at this stage. He intended to continue his consultations in order to move the process forward. In his view, at some stage in the near future, it would be necessary to have a frank and honest assessment of the situation and draw the necessary conclusions.

- Date of next meeting

The Chairman stated that the date for the next meeting had not been fixed, but that the Group remained on call.