

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

C/W/21
12 May 1961

Limited Distribution

COUNCIL
8-12 May 1961

CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY COUNCIL

Drafts

The following drafts of conclusions reached by the Council on certain items of its agenda are submitted for approval. In the minutes of the Council's meetings these conclusions will in each case be preceded by a short statement of the question under discussion and by a note on the trend of the discussion.

Commercial policy problems of newly independent States

It was agreed to forward to the eighteenth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES document L/1458 containing the Executive Secretary's proposals and to draw the attention of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the minutes of the present meeting of the Council. From these minutes the CONTRACTING PARTIES would see that there was in the Council a large measure of support in principle for the proposition that the CONTRACTING PARTIES should stand ready to provide technical assistance of the kind which GATT was best fitted to provide, on the understanding that such assistance would be at the request of the country which needed it. In this connexion the Council endorsed the statement by the Executive Secretary about collaboration with other inter-governmental organizations which are active in the field of technical assistance.

The Council expressed the hope that, at the eighteenth session, contracting parties would make known their willingness, in principle, to co-operate and that the CONTRACTING PARTIES would agree as a first step to indicate to the countries concerned their willingness to furnish advice and guidance on matters falling within the competence and jurisdiction of the GATT and to authorize the Executive Secretary to take the necessary steps to respond to such requests as might come forward.

Ministerial meeting

It was agreed to recommend to the eighteenth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES that there should be a meeting of Ministers at the time of the nineteenth session. As to the exact timing it is suggested that the meeting be held after the second week of the session; the session would be interrupted for the duration of the Ministerial meeting and would resume for the week after.

It was agreed to recommend that Ministers should be invited to address themselves to the main problems of international trade which have been identified by the CONTRACTING PARTIES in the course of their work under the Programme for the Expansion of Trade. The discussions would thus cover tariff barriers to trade (including a review of the results of the Dillon round of tariff negotiations and the consideration of possible future action in the tariff field), trade in agricultural products and obstacles to the trade of less-developed countries. During the discussion in the Council it was suggested that the questions of market disruption and the implications for international trade of the development of regionalism should be included, but it was the general feeling that these need not be spelt out as they could be considered as falling within the general compass of the items mentioned.

It was agreed that the attention of the CONTRACTING PARTIES should be drawn to the fact that, in the view of the Council, there should remain a degree of flexibility in any agenda established at the eighteenth session, so as not to preclude the discussion by Ministers of any major question of general significance for international trade which might arise in the intervening period.

The Council wished to stress the need for careful preparatory work for the Ministerial meeting. In the Council's view, Ministers should be able to address themselves to issues which had been clearly defined in order to give guidance and direction to the CONTRACTING PARTIES, so as to enable them to deal effectively with the difficulties which had been identified in the discussions and studies carried out under the Programme for Expansion of Trade. To contribute to this end, it was agreed to recommend that contracting parties be invited to submit, by 1 September, suggestions as to specific points which might be considered by Ministers, within the framework of the broad items mentioned above, together with proposals for action of the problems thus defined.

Further, it was agreed to recommend that the Council at its meeting in September, or a working party established by the Council, should examine the reports of the Committees set up under the Programme for the Expansion of Trade and the proposals for action. The Council would then report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES on the specific points and proposals to be placed before Ministers.