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# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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COUNCIL

25 April-1 May 1963

## ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING OF MINISTERS

### Note by the Executive Secretary

The following notes and suggestions may assist the Council in its consideration of this item:

#### 1. Nature of the discussions

The fact that the agenda before Ministers will cover subjects of major importance and the fact that the time available to Ministers is very limited, combine to make it essential that this time is used as effectively as possible. So far as can be foreseen time should be made available for the following activities:

- A. Plenary sessions of Ministers
- B. Informal meetings among Ministers
- C. Meetings of officials to draft texts of papers which may facilitate ministerial decisions
- D. Social activities.

#### A. Plenary sessions

It is suggested that to permit time for other activities, especially under B and C above, the plenary sessions should be of relatively short duration. Moreover, if Ministers are to be able to give adequate detailed consideration to the specific items on their agenda it seems highly desirable that statements of a general character should be limited in number and duration. However, as some Ministers may wish to put forward general views and comments on their own national problems or policies, or on the international trade situation as a whole, the Council may wish to propose that Ministers be invited to submit such statements in writing to the secretariat, which will arrange for copies to be distributed. The secretariat would distribute such statements within twenty-four hours if possible. Press facilities are available should a Minister desire to hold a press conference or distribute a prepared text to the Press. Furthermore, radio facilities are also available.

If the above procedure is acceptable, it might be proposed that meetings of Ministers should be held from 11 to 12.30 and from 15.30 to 17.00 each day (excluding 18 and 19 May), with a third meeting if necessary from 18.00 to 19.30.

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B. Informal meetings among Ministers

The Council in selecting the dates for the ministerial meeting had in mind that the inclusion of a weekend would provide a very suitable opportunity for Ministers to arrange informal contacts amongst themselves outside the conference room. Acceptance of the relatively short meetings proposed above would also contribute to this end.

C. Meetings of officials

The work of Ministers in concentrating on fundamental problems and in reaching concrete decisions will be greatly facilitated if officials have the opportunity before plenary sessions of preparing draft texts of documents for the Ministers' consideration. The conference room with full facilities will be available for meetings of officials before and after meetings of Ministers.

D. Social activities

In view of the short duration of the meeting it is particularly desirable that arrangements for entertainment should be co-ordinated through the secretariat. The Council might wish to propose, however, that formal social activity should be limited to one major reception or dinner.

2. Chairmanship

It is desirable that the question of the chairmanship of the ministerial meeting should be settled by the Council, so that discussion of this question can be avoided at the opening of the meeting and the presiding officer will be able to prepare himself in advance.

3. Attendance of observers

Governments and organizations which are normally invited to send observers to sessions of the CONTRACTING PARTIES have been invited to be represented. The Government of Sudan has written to enquire whether they could be permitted to send an observer. The Council may wish to authorize the Executive Secretary to advise the Government of Sudan that an observer will be welcome.