

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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APPLICATIONS FOR ACCESSION

Note by the Executive Secretary

Revision

Article XXXIII provides that a government may accede to the General Agreement "on terms to be agreed between such governments and the CONTRACTING PARTIES". When an application for accession is received the CONTRACTING PARTIES or the Council arrange for relevant aspects of the commercial policy of the applicant country to be examined in a working party which recommends either that provisional accession be granted as an interim arrangement pending full accession under Article XXXIII or that tariff negotiations with a view to full accession take place forthwith between the applicant government and those contracting parties wishing to participate in such negotiations. In the latter case, the protocol containing the terms of accession is prepared by the trade negotiations body, but before this is opened for acceptance a decision approving the terms is submitted to a vote by the contracting parties. In accordance with Article XXXIII this decision must be adopted by a two-thirds majority. Provided the decision has been adopted, the accession becomes effective following acceptance of the protocol by the acceding government.

At present six governments have indicated their desire to accede to the GATT. Argentina, Iceland, Tunisia, the United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia have acceded provisionally pending their full accession pursuant to Article XXXIII, and of these Argentina and Iceland have announced their intention to participate in the current trade negotiations with a view to achieving full accession. In addition, the Government of Ireland has expressed its desire to renew, during the course of the current trade negotiations, the discussions begun in a working party in 1960.

At the seventeenth session the CONTRACTING PARTIES decided to entrust to the Council the task of processing applications for accession when the CONTRACTING PARTIES are not in session. Therefore the Council may wish to consider questions of timing and procedures related to accessions during the current negotiations, and to make

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whatever arrangements may be appropriate. As there is at present no legal basis for the participation of non-contracting parties in the current trade negotiations, these arrangements might include, firstly, a formal invitation to the six governments mentioned above to participate in the negotiations, and secondly, an instruction to the Trade Negotiations Committee to arrange for negotiations with any of these governments which wish to accede during the course of the current trade negotiations and to draw up, at an appropriate stage, the protocols for accession. The examination of commercial policy measures of any country which may later request accession would be undertaken by the Council which might then instruct the Trade Negotiations Committee as appropriate. These arrangements would be in accordance with the procedures followed in the past. In this connexion the Trade Negotiations Committee might be asked to review the text, in the light of later developments, of the model protocol for accession which was drawn up by the CONTRACTING PARTIES in 1950 (BISD, Vol.1, p.111).

As for the contribution which less-developed countries applying for accession might make to the reduction and stabilization of tariffs, the Trade Negotiations Committee would no doubt wish to bear in mind the principle adopted at the meeting of Ministers in May 1963 that "the developed countries cannot expect to receive reciprocity from the less-developed countries".