

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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Agenda Item 1

GATT WORK PROGRAMME

Proposal by the Director-General

The conclusion of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations is an important event in the life of the GATT. The CONTRACTING PARTIES will need to take action on a number of points to ensure that results of the negotiations are effectively implemented and to further work on the improvement of the trading system. The main elements of the work programme for the post-MTN period are listed below, it being understood that this list is not exhaustive and may be reviewed.

1. Implementation of the results of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations

It is noted that the CONTRACTING PARTIES have taken action regarding the Agreements evolved in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (see separate proposal). The GATT Work Programme should give immediate priority to the results of the MTN.

1.1 Tariff schedules

The tariff concessions negotiated in the MTN should be implemented as agreed. The relevant schedules should be brought up to date. This task would be greatly facilitated by the establishment of a Committee on Tariff Concessions with a mandate to:

1. supervise the task of keeping the GATT schedules up to date;
2. supervise the staging of tariff reductions; and
3. provide a forum for discussion of questions relating to tariffs.

1.2 "Framework" texts

The following action should be taken in order to ensure the effective implementation of these texts.

1. Without prejudice to action requested by the CONTRACTING PARTIES through the Council, primary responsibility for the supervision of the implementation of points 1 and 4 of the "Framework" texts should be given to the Committee on Trade and Development.

2. The agreement relating to the conduct of the regular and systematic review of developments in the trading system as agreed in the Group "Framework" and in the Trade Negotiations Committee, should be referred to the Council, with the request that appropriate procedures be taken up at an early meeting of the Council.

3. The Consultative Group of Eighteen should be requested to advise the Council on the forum and modalities for carrying out the future work in the area of export restrictions and charges as agreed in the Group "Framework" and the Trade Negotiations Committee.

1.3 Agriculture

Questions relating to trade in agricultural products will continue to be an important part of the work of the GATT and of its work programme. In this context, it should also be noted that the Council has agreed, in the light of the discussion and the recommendation in the Trade Negotiations Committee to the CONTRACTING PARTIES to further develop active co-operation in the agricultural sector, to request the Director-General to consult with interested delegations on this matter and to report to the next regular session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

2. Safeguards

Continued negotiations on safeguards constitute an essential element in the GATT Work Programme and should be carried out as a matter of urgency in accordance with the agreement reached in the Council on this matter (see separate proposal).

3. Continuation of the process of trade liberalization

The continuation of the process of trade liberalization should be referred to the Council with the request that appropriate procedures be elaborated, and in this context the secretariat should be requested to update the relevant information.

4. Structural adjustment and trade policy

The Consultative Group of Eighteen should be requested to examine this matter further and to advise the Council, and also, through it, the Committee on Trade and Development, on the modalities for carrying out further work in this area, taking into account the continuing rôle of the Committee on Trade and Development.

5. GATT and developing countries

The CONTRACTING PARTIES should recognize the importance of this area and that it is a priority area of work. Each point of the Programme listed so far includes work in individual areas of particular interest to

developing countries. These form part and parcel of an overall approach to the problems faced by developing countries. GATT should ensure that a coherent overall approach be maintained and to this end the Council and the Committee on Trade and Development should co-ordinate their activities on issues of common concern.

5.1 The rôle of the Committee on Trade and Development should be strengthened and should cover, inter alia,

1. work on trade policy and development policies including trade liberalization in areas of special interest to developing countries;
2. primary responsibility for supervision of the implementation of points 1 and 4 of the "Framework" texts (see paragraph 1.2 above);
3. examination of protective action by developed countries against imports from developing countries (see separate proposal);
4. work on structural adjustment and trade of developing countries (see paragraph 4 above); and
5. special attention to the special problems of least developed countries.

5.2 The importance of a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries has been acknowledged. The CONTRACTING PARTIES, through the Committee on Trade and Development, should continue to follow developments in this important area of activity.

5.3 The technical assistance activities of the GATT secretariat should be continued and readapted to meet the requirements of the developing countries in the context of the new Work Programme.

6. Other proposals for future work

The present programme of work does not exclude the future consideration of additional elements, and may be reviewed by the CONTRACTING PARTIES. It is to be noted that certain delegations have presented some proposals for additional items for future work of GATT in the Consultative Group of Eighteen, as reflected in document L/4869. The Consultative Group of Eighteen will continue to deal with these as well as any other proposals as may be presented to it in the future.