

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

CG.18/W/35

16 October 1979

Special Distribution

Consultative Group of Eighteen
Tenth Meeting
22-23 October 1979

ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON SCHEDULES

Note by the Secretariat

The secretariat prepared in 1976, for the use of MTN Group "Tariffs", a document indicating the situation regarding schedules negotiated under the General Agreement and the state as regards their consolidation, for countries participating in the negotiations (document MTN/TAR/W/26 and -/Corr.1). It is evident from that document that the status of many GATT schedules is unsatisfactory. The concessions of many contracting parties are spread out over a large number of legal instruments and the results of many renegotiations under Article XXVIII have never been put in a legal form.

It is being suggested in another context (document L/4821) that contracting parties should be invited to prepare consolidated schedules by 1 July 1980 and that, from this time, the schedules should be published in the form of loose leaves. If this proposal is accepted, it will represent a large step towards increased order and transparency in respect of the schedules. It would, however, seem highly desirable to create a permanent body to supervise that the schedules will be kept up to date; if they are not, most of the advantages of a loose-leaf system will be lost.

It should be recalled that there was in GATT in the 1950's a standing Working Party on Schedules which dealt with questions concerning GATT schedules and which did a very useful job. It is now suggested that a Permanent Committee on Schedules be established to review the updating of schedules, discuss questions that may arise in respect of renegotiations under Article XXVIII and deal with any other matters concerning the implementation of tariff concessions. Such a Committee could also supervise the staging of tariff cuts as established in the Geneva (1979) Protocol and be used as a forum for discussion of other questions relating to the implementation of this Protocol.

The Committee on Schedules could meet regularly once a year and, in addition, when urgent matters require a special meeting. Participation in the Committee would be open to all contracting parties having schedules of concessions.