

GENERAL AGREEMENT
ON TARIFFS AND
TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/481

9 April 1956

Limited Distribution

CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN

Proposed Amendment of GATT Recommendations

The International Chamber of Commerce has submitted a resolution proposing an amendment to the recommendations concerning proof of origin, which were adopted by the CONTRACTING PARTIES on 23 October 1953 (BISD, Second Supplement, page 57). In preparation for the consideration of this proposal by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at their Eleventh Session (see SR.10/11) it would be appreciated if governments would submit their comments not later than 1 September. Comments received will be distributed in addenda to this document.

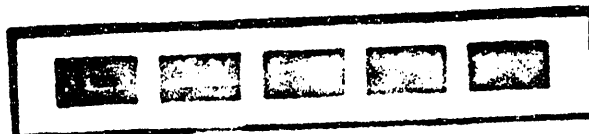
The following is the resolution submitted by the International Chamber of Commerce:

"The International Chamber of Commerce welcomes the recommendations on certificates of origin recently issued by the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), as a useful step towards simplification of Customs procedure.

"It lays particular emphasis on the importance to trade of the first recommendation which limits the requirement of certificates of origin to cases where they are strictly indispensable. The ICC suggests that in the light of the GATT recommendation, each government should scrutinize its present regulations, with a view to reducing to an absolute minimum the number of cases where traders have to produce certificates of origin. Such certificates are in fact unnecessary except in the case of quotas or exchange allocations based on nationality or where preferential treatment is claimed by the importer. Nor should certificates of origin be required when the origin of the goods is already amply proved by other means.

"The only criticism voiced widely in trading circles within the ICC concerns the second recommendation according to which the 'largest number of offices of competent bodies should be authorized to issue certificates of origin ...'.

"This recommendation is believed to be unsatisfactory in its present form for two reasons. First, the multiplication of issuing offices, unless great care were taken in selecting them, might lower the value of the



certificates issued and might even lead unscrupulous traders to apply to several different authorities successively in the hope of finally obtaining a certificate. Secondly, the recommendation refers exclusively to the 'issuing' of certificates of origin. As previously laid down by GATT in its Standard Practices on Documentary Requirements, the door should be left open to the preparation of certificates of origin by the firms themselves either as part of the commercial invoice or as an appendix to it, subject simply to visa by the competent authority.

"It is therefore suggested that the second recommendation should be redrafted to read as follows:

"Governments should ensure that a sufficient number of authorized and genuinely competent offices is available to trade for the issuance and/or visa'ing of certificates of origin."

