# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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Group of Experts on Trade Information Second Meeting

#### GATT INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE

#### Report of the Second Meeting of the Group of Experts

#### I. Introduction

- 1. The Expert Group on Trade Information and Trade Promotion Advisory Services in the GATT met from 15 to 18 February 1965, in pursuance of a recommendation of the CONTRACTING PARTIES at their twenty-first session. Experts in the field of trade information and trade promotion from the following countries participated as members of the Group: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Republic. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. A list of the Experts and the Observers who participated in the meeting is contained in Annex C to this document.

  Mr. Hans Mott, Sweden, continued as Chairman of the Group.
- 2. The purpose of the meeting was to examine, in the light of experience gained and suggestions made by governments, the type and direction of the International Trade Centre's services that would be most useful to exporters in the less-developed countries, having regard to the resources that would be available to the Centre. Accordingly, the Group reviewed the activities of the Centre since its inception and gave consideration to its future work programme. In accordance with its terms of reference the Group undertook an assessment of the financial implications of the proposed future work programme of the Centre.
- 3. In addressing itself to these tasks, the Group took note of the recommendations it had made at its first meeting, namely that the services of the Centre should be orientated towards meeting the practical requirements of the less-developed countries to promote their exports, and that the second meeting of the Exports should devote special attention to the rôle of the Centre in the field of practical export promotion measures which will assist less-developed countries. These criteria have guided the Group in recommending certain new activities as well as some modification in the direction of current work.
- 4. To assist the work of the Expert Group, the secretariat had prepared a note (document L/2357) setting out in summary form (a) an account of the Trade Centre's current activities together with an indication as to the manner in which current activities might be continued; (b) suggestions by less-developed countries regarding the future work of the Centre; and (c) comments on certain other suggestions for developing the trade promotional activities of the Centre.

#### II. Findings and Recommendations

- The Expert Group expressed its appreciation of the work that had been carried 5. out by the Centre since its inception. As regards its future activities, the Group recommended that the tasks included in its previous work programme should be continued; some recommendations were also made as regards the emphasis to be placed on individual activities, as well as in some cases regarding the methods of execution. The Group continued to favour a step-by-step approach as a basis for the Centre's future work and development, and called attention to the need for avoiding duplication of work with other national and international bodies. In this connexion the point was raised that it would be useful for the Group to have, at its next meeting, a brief report on the latter subject, with particular reference to activities at the international level. recommendations of the Group were all accepted unanimously; its findings and recommendations with regard to the different tasks of the Centry are summarized under the relevant headings below.
- 6. The Group took note of a paper "Guiding Recommendations" (see Annex A), presented by a number of delegations, containing operative principles and objectives on which these delegations believed the major part of the Centre's work and process of development should be based. The Group agreed that these principles deserved careful consideration and appropriate account should be taken of them by the Centre in conducting the work proposed in the recommendations.

#### (a) Liaison arrangements

- 7. There was general agreement on the need for strengthening the Centre's liaison network, both directly with the national governments and with their missions in Europe, by an extension of the present network at the official and private trade levels and with various international bodies, and by an intensification of these contacts so as to ensure a wider range of sources.
- 8. As regards the official liaison agencies, it was recalled that the CONTRACTING PARTIES had already agreed to furnish the Centre with information on market opportunities in their own countries. Several experts stressed the importance they attach to the provision of this kind of information.
- 9. Particular attention would have to be paid to making the Centre better known in those countries that need its services most. Because many of these countries do not have missions in Geneva, the Centre should strengthen its working relationships with their capitals and with their missions in other parts of Europe through correspondence channels.

#### (b) Basic documentation and publications

10. The vital need of the Centre for documentary material, whether published or unpublished, was recognized, and it was recommended that the Centre should be given sufficient resources to continue its build-up of such information through the selection of material from current periodicals and the purchase of essential and basic works. Concerning published works it was recommended that the Centre should

in the first instance send to national liaison agencies a list of the works required, and that the latter should endcavour to supply them free of charge and keep them up to date from year to year.

#### (c) Market Information Service

- ll. In view of the usefulness to the less-developed countries of the Market Information Service, it was expected that the volume of its operations would increase considerably in the future.
- 12. As regards the operation of the Service, the Expert Group recommended that, in order to keep work within manageable proportions, the Centre should give preference to enquiries emanating from national liaison agencies, government departments or other agencies recognized by governments, as well as to questions judged to be of practical utility from the point of view of creating the most immediate trade opportunities for less-developed countries.
- 13. The Group recommended that a paper giving guidance on how to formulate requests for information should be prepared and circulated by the Centre.
- 14. The Group felt that when information on the market of a given country was collected from national liaison agencies, the Centre may disclose the identity of the enquiring country, since the information needed would normally vary depending on which exporting country was being answered.
- 15. When collecting information on the market potential in a country it might sometimes be helpful to ask for information not only from the country concerned, but also from other countries that might have carried out market studies on that country. In this connexion, it was recalled that the CONTRACTING PARTIES had already agreed to exchange market studies either through the Centre or directly between themselves.
- 16. The Centre could, with the assent of the enquiring country, circulate the results of surveys with possible multiple interest to other liaison agencies requiring such information. To this end, the Centre would notify liaison agencies of work completed of such a nature. On occasion, the results of some surveys may be circulated.
- 17. Following a suggestion from one of the Experts, the Group recommended that some of the enquiries received by the Market Information Service, e.g. on export opportunities for a given product or products, might be used as material for case studies in educational institutes dealing with foreign trade problems such as graduate schools of business administration. The Centre might refer enquiries suitable for this kind of approach to those contracting parties which indicate that they have appropriate facilities available. Such contracting parties would transmit them to suitable institutes for examination. The results would be routed back to the Centre for earliest transmitted to the enquirer. It would thus also gradually build up a compendium of information on the subject enquired about, that might then be transmitted to other countries expressing an interest in the survey prepared, or used for other trade promotional purposes.

#### (d) FORUM

18. The Expert Group welcomed the FORUM as a promotional vehicle to focus attention on the trade development problems of the less-developed countries and on the work of the Centre in helping to meet them. The need was stressed for maintaining the quality of the contributions to this publication; in this light the FORUM should continue to be published quarterly. With regard to the Trade Opportunities Notes and possibly also the Commercial Policy Notes, the Group recommended that it would be useful to publish these as soon as possible in a separate bulletin which would be circulated as frequently as technical considerations and the supply of material would allow. The text of the Commercial Policy Notes might in this connexion be presented in such a way as to facilitate systematic filing.

#### (e) Other publications by the Centre

- 19. The Expert Group recommended that the Centre should assist the less-developed countries by publishing, in the form of short pamphlets, information on the building up of export promotion services. The information contained in such pamphlets would, inter alia, be based on material supplied to the Centre by governments.
- 20. The Group welcomed the pamphlet describing the export promotion techniques of selected countries and invited other countries, including less-developed ones, to supply similar descriptions. The Group also recommended that the Centre should carry out a synthesis of the individual country descriptions with a view to identifying common characteristics, which might be helpful to less-developed countries in organizing their export promotion services.
- 21. The pamphlet presented to the meeting setting out a list of traders' associations, etc., was considered useful; the Group recommended that it should be extended to cover such organizations in the less-developed countries also.
- 22. The Group recommended that the Centre should collaborate in the final editing of surveys prepared by individual less-developed countries on their export potential, for publication by these countries in pamphlet form. The Centre would make available the distribution list of the FORUM (covering 10,000 addresses) for the diffusion of these pamphlets by the countries concerned.

#### (f) Training courses

23. The Expert Group noted with interest the Centre's participation in the GATT in-service training courses for government officials from less-developed countries with a two-week seminar on export promotion. The Group agreed that such courses would provide a testing-ground for courses which might be organized by the Centre at a later stage.

- 24. The Group recommended that the Centre should continue to encourage the provision by national trade promotion agencies of training facilities in export promotion, the host agencies defraying, to the fullest extent possible, the expenses of personnel from less-developed countries attending these courses.
- 25. In this connexion, the Centre should assume an important liaison function with respect to these nationally-run courses. It should in the light of suggestions from CONTRACTING PARTIES consider: (a) the training needs of the less-developed countries for trade promotion personnel at the government level and for personnel trained in export marketing techniques at the trade level; (b) the criteria and methods of selecting personnel for training courses; (c) the programme and content of training courses; (d) how it is planned to utilize trained personnel on their return to their countries, with a view to ensure that the maximum benefit is derived from them.
- 26. It was also recommended that the Centre should attempt to co-ordinate the itineraries of trainees travelling to the country giving the course so as to enable them to visit trade promotion centres of various other countries en route.

#### (g) On-the-spot surveys

27. The Group felt that a pragratic approach should be adopted toward the proposal that the Centre should undertake on-the-spot surveys to assist less-developed countries with their trade promotional problems. This was a form of assistance that might be developed at a later stage. The Group noted that the CONTRACTING PARTIES, under their Decision of 28 May 1961, had agreed to provide technical assistance while collaborating with other inter-governmental organizations active in that field.

#### (h) Joint promotional efforts

28. The Group recommended that the Centre should explore the possibility of active trade promotional measures to be jointly operated by countries who had a substantial export interest in a product. It was felt that areas of possible co-operation would reveal themselves during the course of the Centre's work. Further studies by the Centre could then lead to suggesting to a group of countries that they come together to consider the feasibility of joint promotional action in specific fields.

#### (i) <u>Co-operative market research</u>

29. The Group felt that there could be instances where exporting countries, individually or jointly, would need more authoritative and detailed market information than the Centre would be able to furnish from its own resources. In such cases, various courses of action might be adopted: for example, a request might be made to liaison agencies to carry out the necessary research at the national level, the Centre synthesizing the national studies; or the work might

be entrusted to qualified specialist organs if the cost of this service could be specially financed. The Group recommended that the Centre should determine what would be the best course of action having regard to the requirements of each case. The Centre itself would act as an agency for organizing the research projects and in this rôle, it would be responsible for the provision of project reports and survey plans.

#### (j) Trade fairs

30. The Group recommended that the Centre give close attention to the subject of trade fairs and their relevance to the expansion of exports from less-developed countries. In particular, the Centre should examine the following matters and counsel the less-developed countries on: (a) the types of fairs from which they were likely to derive the greatest trade benefits; (b) availability of financial assistance to less-developed countries, e.g. provision of stand space at reduced rates; (c) the manner in which less-developed countries should operate their offices at fairs in order to obtain the best results with modest outlays; (d) assistance that some fair authorities are prepared to give to participants in order to facilitate business transactions. Information about these matters that would be of interest to the less-developed countries might be published in the FORUM. In general, it was felt that the Centre should not be tied down too specifically in its activities with respect to trade fairs, but should be allowed a measure of discretion to pursue any suggestions or ideas that would help the less-developed countries to participate fruitfully in trade fairs.

#### (k) Market opportunities clearing house

31. The representative of the United Arab Republic suggested that work in connexion with trade opportunities, now published in the form of notes, should be developed into a day-by-day clearing house operation in which the Centre would be the medium for establishing contact between less-developed countries' exporters offering specific products, and importers in developed as well as less-developed countries who require these products; this service being concentrated especially on trade in processed and semi-processed products. The Group requested that the proposal be put in writing for circulation to the contracting parties, and for the Expert Group to consider at the next meeting. By that time, the further experience of the Centre with the trade opportunities notes would make possible a more realistic assessment of the proposal.

#### III. Financial Implications

32. In accordance with its terms of reference, the Group broadly assessed the financial implications of the Centre's work programme for 1965 as tentatively recommended.

- 33. It took cognizance of a note prepared by the secretariat (see Annex B), outlining staff and other requirements necessary for the effective operation of the Centre, and their estimated costs to the GATT budget.
- 34. While it is not within the competence of the Group to deal with the administrative and financial merits of the assessments made by the secretariat, the Group felt that the total amount involved, i.e. \$70,000 in addition to the provision of \$71,000 already included in the budget, was reasonable, bearing in mind the magnitude of the tasks confronting the Centre.

#### IV. Future Meeting of the Expert Group

35. The Group recommended that the Committee on Trade and Development should be invited to propose to the CONTRACTING PARTIES that the Group be reconvened early in 1966 to carry out a task similar to that undertaken at the present session. The Group particularly recommended that less-developed countries should endeavour to send representatives, possibly their national liaison officials, to the Centre, to attend such meeting and contribute to the examination of the work and the development of the Centre.

#### ANNEX A

#### GUIDING RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Presented by Several Delegations

It was often apparent during the discussions that the Experts had been impressed by the quality of the work already done by the Centre in a few months with very limited resources and in a field so complex as the promotion of exports by developing countries.

The complexity and magnitude of the task which the GATT International Trade Centre has undertaken make it essential not to depart from the pragmatic attitude recommended by the Experts at their fir recting.

In practical terms, acting "step by step" clearly implies that the Centre must:

- (1) Identify the decisive problems among all those which might be taken up;
- (2) With regard to those decisive problems, clarify what must be done before beginning on practical measures;
- (5) As regards practical measures as well as studies, it must avoid any duplication of satisfactory work already done or likely to be done elsewhere and to which there is ready access.

Already, however, a minimum of resources is needed for any serious study of the problems. It is hoped, therefore, that, within the budgetary possibilities, the resources made available to the Centre can be <u>reasonably</u> improved in certain respects, in harmony with the development of the co-operation offered or contemplated by various countries or organizations.

The Centre should primarily act as a catalyst, to stimulate and co-ordinate. For reasons of principle as well as for practical ones, it is essential that the Centre make the best possible use of its national correspondents and in certain cases, if need be, help them to improve their work structures.

Among the problems which might be taken up, the following are considered to be "decisive problems":

- trade information;
- training of specialized personnel;
- improvement of trade administrative infrastructures.

Each of these problems calls for a different treatment and type of work and approach.

#### I. MARKET INFORMATION SERVICE

(paragraph 28 of the Note by the Secretariat, document L/2357 of 12 February 1965)

In fields in which it is often very difficult to know whom to contact to obtain information, the existence of the GATT International Trade Centre is of inestimable practical value for all countries.

It is therefore essential that the Market Information Service should continue to furnish or to help to obtain the information requested of it on trade and marketing conditions.

It is considered nevertheless that, from the realistic point of view, the Centre's Market Information Service should give priority:

- (a) to questions relating to developing countries in particular;
  - (b) at the present stage, to <u>requests</u> coming from public administrations and other recognized organizations in those countries.

Furthermore, as regards the procedure for seeking information and preparing replies, it seems essential that the Service should primarily play a co-ordinating rôle by systematically calling on its liaison institutions and network of correspondents. Reference to other sources of information should be made in the light of the tested willingness and ability of trade sources to provide information on request.

#### II. TRAINING OF SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL

(paragraph 29 of Note by the Secretariat, L/2357 of 12 February 1965)

- A. The training of responsible officers for official administrations and other recognized organizations to deal with export promotion in developing countries seems to be a fundamental need.
- B. At the moment, the Centre has neither the means nor sufficient experience to embark on training courses. It is therefore essential that it should call on outside assistance, technical and material, public and private.

The Group expresses the wish that the Centre should concern itself with seeking such assistance from interested countries and co-ordinating it.

- C. It is considered that this work by the Centre would be assisted if the following technical problems were thoroughly examined:
  - 1. Analysis of the training needs of developing countries:
  - qualitative needs (levels, specialization)
  - quantitative needs (figures, present turnover) while endeavouring to identify priority criteria (countries, sectors, training level...)

- 2. Procedures for recruiting trainees:
- advertising of fellowship vacancies
- questionnaires and procedures for applications
- selection of candidates
- grouping of candidates by compatible national teams
- 3. Training programmes and methods
- content and specialization of programmes
- duration of training courses
- combination and proportion of training courses and in-service periods
- permanent training, or "refresher courses"
- 4. Problems of full employment of trainees after the course upon return to country of origin
- this problem must always be envisaged before the trainees return;
- in many cases, special technical assistance may be desirable, at the time of return, to prolong and assist on the spot the proper use of the knowledge acquired in host countries.
- D. The problems of calculating and apportioning the financial burden and the responsibilities for practical organization of training courses can be evaluated and solved with less difficulty to the extent that the Centre can first clarify the purely technical problems referred to above, with the assistance of experts from the countries and organizations concerned.

#### III. IMPROVEMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURES

It is recalled that in all countries, but more obviously in the less-developed countries, export promotion is largely conditioned by the improvement of commercial infrastructures, both public and private, such as national information centres, bilateral chambers of commerce, and exporters' associations. It is therefore essential that the GATT International Trade Centre should concern itself with such improvement, which can take a variety of forms.

It would be desirable for the Centre to prepare a broad exchange of views and experience in this field while availing itself of parallel efforts by GATT itself, by major international organizations and by national bodies.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, it is considered that for the moment trade information should be in the forefront of the Centre's <u>practical activities</u>, but the problems of training specialized commercial personnel for the developing countries should occupy a fundamental rôle in the analysis and study activities of the Centre. The same applies to problems of commercial administrative infrastructure.

#### ANNEX B

#### GATT INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE

#### Financial Implications

#### Note by the Secretariat

- 1. Point (iii) of the Group's terms of reference requires the Group to assess the financial implications of establishing and operating the Centre.
- 2. At their first meeting in February 1964, the Group considered a secretariat estimate that the cost of providing the services envisaged for the Trade Centre would be of the order of magnitude of \$60,000 or, if trade promotion advisory services were also to be rendered, of approximately \$70,000 during the first year. Personnel requirements in the secretariat note were estimated at three professionals (exclusive of translator), and two general service staff for the first year. Taking into account the range of services to be provided, the Group felt that estimates of this order of magnitude would not be excessive. The estimates were subsequently accepted by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at their twenty-first session (L/2184).
- 3. Although the Centre has been able to operate within the budget allocated to it, it has been found necessary to provide some temporary assistance to ensure:
  (a) fulfilment of the basic programme of work laid down by the Expert Group for the early stages of the Centre, and (b) prompt attention to the large number of enquiries that have come forward from developing countries. As regards the latter, it had not been foreseen that the demands made upon the Centre would build up so quickly. The temporary assistance referred to above has taken the form of the loan of one professional officer from another branch of the secretariat and, by January 1965, the hiring of four general service staff, comprising two stenographers, a circulation clerk, and a general duties clerk.
- 4. The Group will recall that in submitting its estimates in February 1964, the secretariat, in document Spec(64)20, indicated that by 1965 the Centre would need eleven officers. If the temporary assistance at present employed is included, the Centre has now almost reached this figure.
- 5. The future staff requirements of the Centre depend, of course, upon the programme of work which the CONTRACTING PARTIES, as advised by the Expert Group, agree should be undertaken by the Centre. If the recommendations put forward in the Group's present report were accepted, it would be the estimate of the secretariat that the staff would need to be built up over the present year to reach a total of sixteen early in 1966, comprising eight professional officers and eight general service staff.
- 6. The staff would be employed in three principal sections the Market Information Section, the Training Section and the Documentation and Publications Section.

- 7. It is proposed that the Market Information Section be headed by an Economic Affairs Officer supported by a Trade Information Officer and a Trade Promotion Officer.
- 8. The Training Section would be headed by an Economic Affairs Officer as would the Documentation Unit. The Publications Unit would be headed by an Economic Affairs Officer/Editor.
- 9. The general service staff required would be as follows: Administrative Assistant, Clerk-Bibliographer, Clerk-Stenographer (bilingual), Clerk-Stenographer (bilingual), Clerk-Stenographer, Clerk-Typist, Clerk-Typist, and a Circulation Clerk.
- 10. The estimated cost of the proposed establishment, as outlined above, is as follows:
  - (a) Salaries and post adjustments

US\$ 105,000

(b) Common staff costs (installation expenses, family allowances, pensions and sickness fund contributions, education grants, etc.)

US\$ 27,200

US\$ 132,200

- ll. Apart from the costs directly related to salaries, it is necessary to provide for stationery and office supplies, postage, cable and telephone charges, all of which are directly proportionate to the number of staff. The estimate for these items totals US\$6.000.
- 12. The cost of books and information material is estimated at US\$3,000 most of which would be a non-recurring charge.
- 13. The estimated cost of the printing and distribution (12,000 copies) of four issues of the FORUM magazine in English, French and Spanish, amounts to US\$17,300. In addition, roneoed monthly bulletins each in three language editions, consisting of Trade Opportunity Notes and the Commercial Policy Chronicle, would cost approximately US\$6,700, including distribution costs. A further four roneoed pamphlets on special subjects would cost US\$700. These amounts include printing, paper, envelopes, distribution clarges payable to the United Nations, postage etc.
- 14. The estimates quoted above are summarized in the Appendix to this document which shows a net increase of US\$64,200 over the provisions included for the Centre in the 1965 budget. It will be noted that the estimates include non-recurring expenditure of US\$10,950.
- 15. In addition, the regular budget item for furniture and equipment would have to be increased by US\$5,800. This also would be a non-recurring charge.

APPENDIX

# INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE

Summary (in US dollars)

Net increase of the 1965 budget	33,500	13,800	9,000	2,000	3,900	64,200 (c)
Provision already included in the 1965 budget	44,800	9,400	i	1,000	15,800	71,000
		(7,600)x		(2,200)x	(1,150)x	(10,950)x
New Estimates	78,300	23,200	000,9	3,000	24,700	1,35,200
	(a)	(p)				
	Salaries and post adjustments	Common staff costs	General office expenses	Books and information material	FORUM and pamphlets (printing, distribution, postage, etc.)	

The full annual charges for these items amount to US\$105,000 and US\$27,200. The difference results from a retardation factor to be applied to the recruitment of new staff during 1965. (a,b)

(c) See also paragraph 15.

(x) Bracketed figures show non-recurring amounts.

#### ANNEX C/ANNEXE C

#### LIST OF REPRESENTATIVES - LISTE DES REPRESENTANTS

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#### CONSEIL DE MINISTRES

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M. Claude du Sault Centre National du Commerce Extérieur

M. Jacques Rosfelter Centre National du Commerce Extérieur

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#### FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF CERMANY

#### Representatives

. . M. Gebhardt Regierungsrat, Federal Ministry of Economy

Mr. Leonhardt Diplomvolkswirt, Eundesstelle für Aussenhandelsinformation, Köln

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Mr. L. Dafgard Head of Section,

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