

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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CONTRACTING PARTIES
Twenty-Second Session

REGIONAL LIAISON ARRANGEMENTS

Note by the Executive Secretary

The question of regional liaison arrangements was the subject of a preliminary discussion at the twenty-first session on the basis of a note (W.21/4) submitted by the Executive Secretary. This note proposed the following as being possible alternative courses of action:

- (i) the establishment of liaison offices in Africa, Asia and Latin America;
- (ii) regular visits to these areas by the Executive Secretary, the Deputy Executive Secretary or senior officials of the secretariat; and
- (iii) the organization of annual regional meetings by countries in each area.

Following the discussion at the twenty-first session, it was agreed that a working party (L/2180) should examine the proposals put forward in the note by the Executive Secretary, together with any other suggestions that might be submitted by contracting parties; no such suggestions have so far been received from contracting parties.

Since the twenty-first session, contacts between the secretariat and Africa, Asia and Latin America have continued to increase and the three areas have been visited several times, for example on the occasion of sessions of regional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies, meetings of trade committees, etc. Such contacts will show a considerable increase as a result of the recent establishment in the secretariat of the Department of External Relations. The existence of the new Department will enable a concerted effort to be made towards closer and more frequent contacts and will make it possible to devote more attention generally to this increasingly important activity. It should be added that it is also the intention, with the establishment of the new Department, to carry out a comprehensive study of all aspects of liaison between the secretariat and governments, inter-governmental bodies, etc. outside Europe. The Executive Secretary will report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES on the results of this study by the secretariat.

In the light of the above, the CONTRACTING PARTIES might consider it desirable to defer further consideration of this question until such time as the report of the Executive Secretary is available.