

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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THE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Statement by the International Chamber of Commerce

The following statement, which was adopted by the Commission on the Expansion of International Trade of the International Chamber of Commerce at its meeting of 3-4 February 1966, is distributed for the information of members of the Trade Negotiations Committee.

The International Chamber of Commerce welcomes the agreement reached at Luxemburg between the member countries of the European Economic Community (EEC). This should permit the resumption of the Geneva international trade negotiations, the slow progress of which has caused great concern to the business community in recent months.

The International Chamber of Commerce continues to hold the view that the success of these negotiations provides the most practical means of stimulating international trade on a world-wide basis in the near future, of preventing a resurgence of protectionism and of avoiding the difficulties that some countries fear may arise from the existence of regional economic groups in Europe.

It considers that a major reduction of the barriers to international trade is more than ever necessary if the rate of economic expansion in industrial countries is to be maintained and if the efforts of the developing countries to achieve a reasonable rate of economic growth are to succeed.

Time is short. The powers granted to the President of the United States by the Trade Expansion Act without which the Geneva negotiations could never have started, will expire in June 1967, and before it can promulgate any reductions in duties negotiated at Geneva the United States Administration must carry out formalities demanded by the Act which will require several months. The negotiations must not therefore extend beyond the end of the year.

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Accordingly,

1. The International Chamber of Commerce appeals urgently to the governments of all countries taking part in the Geneva negotiations to do their utmost to ensure that these are completed before the end of 1966.
2. It urges them to place on the Conference table all the requests for and offers of concessions that have not yet been officially submitted, so that the final phase of the negotiations may begin at the latest in the early days of April.
3. In the industrial products sector, the governments should present detailed requests for and offers of concessions in respect particularly of the following points, all of which are equally essential:
 - (a) The lists of exceptions. Action should be taken to enable these lists to be shortened, as otherwise the across-the-board tariff reductions offered without any exceptions by certain parties to the negotiations may be withdrawn.
 - (b) The tariff disparities. A satisfactory solution to this problem must be found if the success of the negotiations in some vital sectors is not to be placed in jeopardy.
 - (c) The principal non-tariff barriers, such as those arising from certain anti-dumping regulations and methods of customs valuation. These barriers should be removed in order to ensure the success of the negotiations particularly concerning the iron and steel and chemical industries.
4. In the agricultural products sector, offers of and requests for concessions should primarily concentrate on the following points:
 - (a) undertakings which governments would be prepared to give in the cereals sector concerning conditions of access and competition;
 - (b) undertakings that governments would be prepared to give concerning other temperate zone agricultural products;
 - (c) the abolition or substantial reduction of duties and taxes on tropical products.
5. Finally, the governments should present by early April specific requests for and offers of concessions such as will permit the fruitful opening of negotiations between developed and less-developed countries as well as of negotiations between the less-developed countries themselves. These negotiations should produce results corresponding to the declared intention of the Ministers of the countries parties to GATT to foster the expansion of the trade of the developing countries.