

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

LDC/M/29

1 November 1965

Special Distribution

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF A GROUP OF LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ON 19 OCTOBER 1965

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The twenty-ninth in a series of meetings of a group of less-developed countries took place on 19 October 1965. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. E. Letts, Ambassador of Peru.
2. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Central African Republic, Chile, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Israel, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Sierra Leone, United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia.
3. In opening the meeting the Chairman recalled that at the last meeting of the Group it was generally agreed that the statement of offers by less-developed countries would include a declaration of intention by less-developed countries to study and negotiate on measures aimed at the expansion of trade between them, as part of their contribution to the objectives of the Kennedy Round. Some of the less-developed countries which tabled their statement of offers recently had incorporated a declaration to this effect. The Chairman expressed the hope that other less-developed countries submitting their offers in the context of the Kennedy Round would also act accordingly.
4. Commenting on the follow-up work to be done on such a declaration, some members felt that the time had come for exploring the actual ways and means by which trade among less-developed countries could be increased.
5. In considering the question how best less-developed countries could take action with a view to promoting trade between themselves, it was recognized that trade exchanges among less-developed countries were inhibited by a number of deep-rooted factors. The high tariffs and the general quota restrictions affected trade between less-developed countries, and was a reflection in many instances, of the lack of complementarity between their economies and of their balance-of-payments difficulties. In addition, transport problems and lack of information on marketing possibilities presented formidable obstacles. All these elements had to be kept in view if a serious effort is to be made to expand trade among less-developed countries.

6. After some discussion, it was suggested that it would be useful if the representative of each less-developed country prepared a paper containing his suggestion as to how meaningful discussions and negotiations for expansion of trade among developing countries could be started. The Chairman clarified that these papers should be prepared on an informal basis and need not commit national governments at this stage. These papers would only help in the evolution of a workable programme of action for expansion of trade among developing countries which could be submitted to national governments for their consideration in due course. It was suggested that, among other things, the paper prepared by each representative might contain information on the following points:

1. present lists of items notified as being of export interest by the developed country in question and any indication regarding export forecasts. A selection could be made to mention specifically products for which other less-developed countries could be regarded as providing markets;
2. an indication of present imports of commodities of which the less-developed country concerned is likely to remain a net importer for some time, taking into account export interest indicated by other less-developed countries;
3. to what extent are requirements of the commodities listed under (2) being met from (i) other less-developed countries and (ii) developed countries, and what are the obstacles to and the possibilities of meeting future requirements by larger imports from the less-developed countries;
4. existing tariff or non-tariff policies for items listed under (2). Mention commodities in respect of which the less-developed country concerned feels that a tariff reduction on a most-favoured-nation basis or a tariff or non-tariff preference to other less-developed countries could expand trade. Indicate conditions under which reduction or such preference could be offered;
5. action which the less-developed country feels can be taken in the field of payments arrangements and transportation.

It was understood that in these papers, suggestions for action by other less-developed countries could also be made on an informal basis.

7. The Group agreed that other less-developed countries not represented in the Group might join in this exercise if they wished.

8. The Group agreed to give a fuller consideration to the above proposal at its next meeting, to be held at a time and date to be communicated to the members of the Group in due course.