MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP ON TEXTILE DOCUMENTATION

Report by the Chairman

1. Following the decision taken by the Textiles Committee at its meeting of 27 October 1978, the Technical Sub-Group on Textile Documentation met on 22 March 1979 to review the reporting to the Textiles Committee of the statistical and other information necessary for the discharge of its functions under Article 10 (2) of the Arrangement. In accordance with this task, the Sub-Group proceeded to review reporting to the Textiles Committee under three headings.

1. Reporting on measures to facilitate adjustment

2. The Chairman recalled that the Textiles Committee, at its last meeting in October 1978, agreed that all parties to the Arrangement should be invited to update the information contained in the report on adjustment measures (COM.TEX/W/36 and Add.1). In the course of the discussion in the Committee it was pointed out that in their submission participants should include not only measures taken, but also policies adopted by them to encourage such adjustments. Reference was also made to the requirements of Article 1:4 of the Arrangement. Furthermore, the Committee agreed that the Technical Sub-Group could also consider the question of reporting on adjustment measures.

3. Without embarking on any detailed discussion of this question, the Technical Sub-Group agreed that an airgram along the lines mentioned above should be sent to participating countries.1 As regards the information thus collected, a suggestion was made that it should be analyzed by the secretariat before submission to the Textiles Committee. The need for such analysis was questioned and in this respect it was pointed out that this particular task was required of the Textiles Committee itself, under Article 10:2, of the Arrangement. It was thus up to the Committee, if it so decided, to instruct the secretariat to prepare any such analysis as might be required.

II. Statistical reporting scheme

4. The Chairman recalled that the Sub-Group had met in 1974 to examine the statistical requirements of the Textiles Committee in terms of Article 10(4) and as a consequence had recommended a statistical reporting scheme that it considered would provide the minimum data relevant and indispensable to the needs of the Committee. He drew the attention of the Sub-Group to Document COM.TEX/W/60 and addendum, which summarized the operations under the reporting scheme. As it appeared from this document, the response received so far from participating countries was, in his view, inadequate. Although some two-thirds of the members of the Arrangement had supplied statistics, only a few had been able

---

1See GATT/AIR 1554.
to provide data for all the elements comprising the scheme, and only twelve countries, less than one-third of the members, regularly reported up-to-date data. Furthermore, it had been difficult to establish from the information received so far the extent to which the data were comparable. As a consequence, the data which the secretariat had so far submitted to the Textiles Committee and the TSB were almost entirely drawn from published sources. The question was therefore raised as to whether the reporting scheme was in fact required.

5. After discussion, the Sub-Group recognized that the statistics which had been provided by the secretariat were insufficient to meet the needs of the Committee. It agreed that direct reporting of more detailed and comprehensive data, as contained in the reporting scheme, was necessary.

6. Several members, who had not so far fulfilled their obligations with regard to the reporting scheme, were able to report that they were now in a position to supply the data required on a regular basis. Some delegations were able to report improvements in the coverage of the data already reported. The spokesmen from a number of member countries pointed out the need for reporting under the scheme to be as complete as possible in order to develop a viable framework from which an overall knowledge of the textile sector as a whole could be obtained, and emphasized the need for reciprocity in this respect. In the light of this information the Sub-Group noted that improvements in countries' response could be achieved.

7. In considering whether modifications of the coverage or detail of the scheme would better meet the requirements of the Textiles Committee, one delegation requested that the statistical base be widened to include data on handloom fabrics and products thereof. During the discussion, some delegations expressed the view that comprehensive data was needed on all aspects of the textiles sector. Other delegations were of the view these products were outside the framework of the MFA and that therefore the question of collecting statistics on them did not arise. The Sub-Group recognized that no consensus could be reached on this question and agreed that the Textiles Committee might wish to give it further consideration.

8. The spokesmen from a number of developing countries pointed out that their governments were experiencing difficulties in complying with the reporting scheme due to a number of technical problems in their national administrations, and indicated that assistance on textile matters should be provided by the secretariat. One delegation suggested that a course on textiles could be included in the GATT commercial policy course, or given separately. The Chairman undertook to inform the Director-General of the proposals.

9. Some delegations were of the view that statistical reporting should be concentrated on textile products subject to restraint agreements. One delegation requested that this type of data be regularly circulated. The Sub-Group was informed that these data were not obtainable from the present reporting scheme and that in order to obtain such data the details of the scheme would have to be considerably extended. The Sub-Group therefore agreed not to proceed with consideration of this question at this stage.
10. It was generally agreed that the statistics collected should be regularly circulated to members of the Textiles Committee. A number of delegations were of the view that quarterly circulation of the data would enable them better to follow satisfactorily developments in the textiles sector.

III. Analysis of developments in production and trade

11. The Chairman recalled that, at the last meeting of the Textiles Committee, some delegations expressed the view that, from experience, the Committee did not have sufficient time to undertake an adequate analysis of developments in production and trade, including any measures to facilitate adjustment, and that this task would be better consigned to a special working group or the Sub-Group on Textile Documentation.

12. After discussion, the Sub-Group agreed to recommend to the Textiles Committee that it consider whether the mandate of the Sub-Group should be extended to undertake the analysis of developments in textile production and trade. For the next meeting of the Textiles Committee, the secretariat undertook to prepare a note on developments in production and trade in textiles along the lines of those prepared in the past.