Committee of Participating Countries

Summary of Discussion at Eighteenth Meeting held on 31 October 1977

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Committee of Participating Countries, provided for in the Protocol Relating to Trade Negotiations Among Developing Countries, held its eighteenth meeting on 31 October 1977 under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. Zúñiga (Chile).

2. The draft Agenda for the meeting circulated in document CPC/W/51 was adopted.

Accession of Romania

3. In connexion with Romania's application for accession to the Protocol, the Chairman stated his understanding that the procedures aimed at the exchange of concessions between Romania and interested participating countries, set out in the summary of discussion at the seventeenth meeting of the Committee, were being broadly followed by those member countries which had expressed interest in entering into negotiations with Romania. The delegation of India had made available in CPC(SECRET)3, a list of products which had been submitted to the Romanian authorities in accordance with the agreed procedures. Some members indicated their intention of entering into a round of negotiations with Romania in the coming weeks. The results of these negotiations would be made known to all participating countries as soon as practicable.

4. The Committee took note of recent developments concerning Romania's application for accession to the Protocol. It agreed to revert to this matter at its next meeting in the light of progress made in the negotiations between Romania and interested participating countries, with a view to taking up, as necessary, any outstanding matters needing attention in accordance with the procedures outlined in paragraph 6 of document CPC/41.
Ratification of the Protocol

5. The Chairman recalled that at its last meeting, the Committee had taken note of a communication from the Philippines, circulated as CPC(SECRET)2, concerning that country's ratification of the Protocol. In the absence of the representative of the Philippines, it was agreed that this matter should be kept on the agenda to enable the Committee to revert to it at its next meeting. The Chairman also informed the Committee that the secretariat had kept in touch periodically with the delegation of Paraguay in Brussels with regard to the question of ratification of the Protocol by Paraguay. It had been informed that Paraguay's accession to the Protocol was presently before the Paraguayan Parliament for approval.

6. The Committee took note of the situation with regard to ratifications of the Protocol which were still outstanding.

Enlargement of the Protocol

7. The Chairman drew attention to document CPC/W/52, containing a progress report on the technical work being carried out by the secretariat in relation to enlargement of the Protocol and listing countries which had so far indicated their wish to participate in this work. Members expressed their satisfaction at the fact that a significant number of developing countries were participating in the present exercise and expressed the hope that other developing countries might also wish to participate. While recalling the agreement that priority attention should be given to the multilateral trade negotiations, these members further expressed the hope that the information being prepared by the secretariat would be made available as quickly as possible in order to assist in examining the possibilities of a new round of trade negotiations among developing countries.

8. The Committee took note of the progress report on the collection of data, presented in CPC/W/52, and agreed to revert to matters relating to enlargement of the Protocol at its next meeting.

Annual report

9. The Chairman recalled that at its last meeting, the Committee had asked the secretariat to prepare a draft annual report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES on the fourth year of operation of the Protocol, for consideration by the Committee. The draft was circulated as CPC/W/50 and Add.1.

10. In referring to the draft, several members indicated their satisfaction that overall trade among participating countries in products contained in the schedules of concessions again showed an upward trend during 1976, despite the difficulties which had affected international economic relations generally during that period. It was noted, however, that imports of items in the schedules of concessions
annexed to the Protocol continued to constitute a relatively small percentage of
the total trade of participating countries and that trade in certain items in the
schedules remained small or negligible, thus indicating the need to explore
supplementary measures that might be helpful in expanding this trade. In this
connexion, it was believed that the technical work being undertaken by the
secretariat in relation to the enlargement of the Protocol could be helpful for
the purpose of such exploration. One member suggested that future annual reports
might also provide information on trade exchanges among participating countries
in percentage terms. Some members urged participating countries to make every
effort to increase their mutual trade exchanges in items included in the
schedules of concessions.

11. The report\(^1\), as amended in the light of suggestions made by members, was
adopted by the Committee.

Pakistan's customs tariff

12. The representative of Pakistan said that his Government had found it
necessary to revise Pakistan's customs tariff. As this had involved deviations
from certain rates of duty bound in GATT, the Government of Pakistan had
requested authorization from the Council of Representatives, to enter into
negotiations with interested contracting parties on items where GATT bindings
had been affected. His Government had also requested a waiver to permit
implementation of the revised duty rates pending renegotiations. However, the
revision of Pakistan's customs tariff had not affected the concessions in the
Pakistani schedule under the Protocol.

Rotation of officers

13. The Chairman said that in accordance with the rules of procedure of the
Committee, contained in document CPC/2, Chile's term of office had come to an
end. He thanked delegations for their co-operation and support in connexion
with the activities of the Committee. The representative of Spain, Mr. A. Iranzo,
assumed the Chairmanship of the Committee for the forthcoming period, with the
representative of Greece becoming the Vice-Chairman.

Next Meeting

14. The Chairman said that in accordance with usual procedures, the date of the
next regular quarterly meeting of the Committee would be fixed by the Chairman
in consultation with members of the Committee and the secretariat.

\(^1\)Issued as L/4561 and Add.1.