GATT ACTIVITIES IN 1979 AND
CONCLUSION OF THE TOKYO ROUND
MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Annual Report on GATT Work Published

The conclusion of the Tokyo Round multilateral trade negotiations and the start already made in implementing the agreements resulting from these negotiations, GATT's future work programme, and continuing stress in international trade relations, are the dominant themes of GATT Activities in 1979, published today.

The report also describes GATT activities outside the scope of the Tokyo Round, especially the various programmes aimed at promoting the trade interests of developing countries, and it gives an account of the international trade disputes which were brought to GATT for conciliation and settlement during 1979.

Conclusion of the Tokyo Round

The report says that the various Tokyo Round agreements, which will reduce tariffs and regulate more closely the use of non-tariff measures, have resumed the post-war trend towards worldwide trade liberalization that had been halted since completion in 1972 of the Kennedy Round cuts in customs duties. In addition, the Tokyo Round agreements have overhauled and improved some major ground rules of the international trading system

1 'GATT Activities in 1979' is available in English, French and Spanish editions and may be ordered from booksellers or directly from the GATT secretariat, Centre William Rappard, 15th rue de Lausanne, 1211 Geneva 21. Price US$7.00 or Swiss francs 12.00.

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as embodied in the General Agreement itself. The report goes on to point out that special and more favourable treatment for the trade of developing countries forms an important part of both the liberalizing and rule-improving aspects of the Tokyo Round results.

The report adds that "against the background of the unfavourable economic and trading conditions that existed throughout the Tokyo Round negotiations, they must be judged a remarkable achievement. The credit must essentially be given to a combination of dogged effort by the negotiators in Geneva and enlightened leadership and support provided by their national governments, legislatures and public opinion."

**GATT's future work programme**

Top priority in the future work programme (adopted by GATT's member states at their annual session in November 1979) is given to implementing the Tokyo Round agreements, since the value of the agreements depends on their being applied promptly. The report notes that the governing committees or councils of all the agreements that have so far entered into force have already met. Implementation of the Tokyo Round results has thus effectively begun.

The chapter describing GATT's future work programme details other important items on the agenda:

- continuing the safeguard negotiations which were the major piece of unfinished business left over from the Tokyo Round.

- carrying forward the process of trade liberalization. (The report notes here that the immense quantity of information brought together for the Tokyo Round - such as the catalogue of national non-tariff measures affecting trade - will be kept up to date. It also points out that the reduction of quantitative restrictions affecting exports of developing countries, and liberalization of agricultural trade, will require special attention.)

- the Consultative Group of Eighteen, now established as a permanent body, is to examine the question of structural adjustment and trade policy, and advise on GATT's future work on this matter of critical importance to trade relations between North and South.

- priority is given to work on specified trade issues of interest to developing countries, and the role of GATT's Committee on Trade and Development is significantly strengthened. The report notes that the issues identified for the Committee's attention correspond closely with a number of those since indicated by the Brandt Commission as requiring urgent action.
Conciliation and settlement of international trade disputes

Conciliation and settlement of the trade disputes which inevitably arise from time to time among its member states is one of GATT's principal functions. The final chapter of the report gives brief but detailed accounts of the disputes which were brought to GATT by its members for conciliation during 1979.

The report says that "while there is no reason to suppose that these disputes will be any fewer in 1980, they should be somewhat easier to handle, because the Tokyo Round agreements have equipped GATT with stronger and clearer rules and institutional machinery than ever before for resolving trade problems. In the new decade now opening these improvements will be put to the test.".

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