MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INFORMAL GROUP OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HELD ON 24 MAY 1967

Prepared by the Secretariat

1. The informal group of developing countries in GATT held its sixty-third meeting on 24 May 1967 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Dr. José Antonio Encinas del Pando, Ambassador of Peru. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Central African Republic, Ceylon, Chile, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Nigeria, Peru, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Republic, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.

2. The group discussed the Kennedy Round, in particular the work which remained to be done in the light of the timetable for the remaining weeks of the negotiations adopted at the last meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee.

3. Certain members of the group expressed concern that the final lists of positive offers of the European Economic Community and certain other developed countries had not been made available. Questions were asked as to whether it would be possible to make changes in the draft lists of concessions after 31 May, whether any clarification was available as to how the problem of advance implementation would be handled, what would be discussed during the Group on Cereals scheduled for 30 May, what was the relationship between the Kennedy Round and the negotiations between developing countries, and what would be the legal means of inserting a text in the protocol embodying the results of the Kennedy Round negotiations on the already agreed principle that preferences could be exchanged among developing countries without extending them to developed countries. Members emphasized the need for an early meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Participation of Developing Countries as soon as possible after 31 May to take stock of the situation regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Punta del Este meeting of the Committee on Trade and Development, including the question of compensation to developing countries for any loss of preferences resulting from the negotiations.

4. On the question of advance implementation, the Chairman referred to the Press Communiqué issued by the Director-General in his personal capacity, GATT/990, which contained a paragraph prepared by a drafting group, which had included members nominated by the informal group. In this paragraph it was mentioned that the participants had declared their determination to reach a decision for immediate implementation of tariff cuts by the time the protocol embodying the results of the negotiations was open for signature.

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5. Mr. Mathur, Assistant Director-General, was asked by the Chairman to comment on some of the points raised. Mr. Mathur said that in preparing the final schedules of concessions for 19 June, delegations would have an opportunity to clear up any outstanding points which have been brought to light by the draft schedules available by 31 May. The EEC had stated that their original offer, as modified by changes which were notified subsequently, remained their eventual offer. With regard to the next meeting of the Group on Cereals, it was his understanding that a number of questions relating to the multilateralization of the Cereals arrangement and points of detail would be taken up at the forthcoming meeting. On the question of the negotiations between developing countries, he pointed out that their relationship with the Kennedy Round protocol had already been dealt with in the procedure for these negotiations formulated and considered in the informal group.

6. The group agreed, after discussion, to invite the secretariat to arrange contacts between the EEC and interested delegations from developing countries for any clarification that the latter may require on the present state of EEC offers. The secretariat was also requested to obtain clarification on the situation in specific products on the basis of lists submitted by interested delegations where such information was required from any of the other participants from developed countries.

7. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on the Participation of Developing Countries should be requested to convene a meeting of the Sub-Committee as early as possible after 31 May to review the implementation of the Punta del Este recommendations. It was suggested that the Director-General be requested to use his good offices for promoting a favourable settlement of the question of advance implementation of tariff cuts. It was also agreed that the Director-General be asked to give an opinion on whether, and in what manner, it would be legally possible to include a text in the protocol embodying the results of the Kennedy Round negotiations on the already agreed principle that developing countries should be allowed to exchange preferences among themselves without extending the benefits of such concessions to developed countries.

8. Mr. Mathur referred to the forthcoming meeting of the Expert Group on Trade Information and Trade Promotion Advisory Services and hoped that members of the informal group would draw the attention to their authorities to that meeting. In order to facilitate adequate preparation, an exchange of views on this question at a subsequent meeting of the informal group would also be useful.