II. Examination of Further Products of Export Interest to Less-Developed Countries

A. Introduction

1. Following the examination of the products included in Lists 1 to 3, it was repeatedly pointed out in the Committee that it should not restrict its attention to the items contained in these lists (L/1925, paragraph 41). In preparation for the last meeting of the Committee in March 1963, the secretariat had been asked to prepare a draft list of products of importance to the export trade of the less-developed countries (COM.III/105). While the Committee did not feel in a position at that meeting to enter into a substantive discussion on that matter, the Committee indicated in its submission to Ministers (L/1989, paragraphs 16 and 20) that it intended to consider an enlargement of the list of products examined, in order to broaden the area of trade subject to the Programme of Action which, as agreed by the Committee (L/1989, paragraph 5), would relate, in the first instance, to the products which had already been examined by the Committee.

2. In the Conclusions adopted by Ministers, it was agreed that the Programme of Action related to products identified by Committee III; it being understood that the Action Programme might subsequently be extended to an enlarged list of products, to be agreed upon (MIN(63)7, paragraph 3).
3. For the discussion under this heading, the Committee had before it a document (COM.III/120) setting out products nominated for inclusion in a further list of products to be examined by the Committee, and indicating other products brought to the notice of the secretariat as being of special export interest to less-developed countries. Further notifications regarding such products were received during the course of the meeting. A list of these products comprising 178 items, and indicating the countries which had suggested these products, was circulated to the Committee in document Spec(63)283 and Add.1. The document which also contained preliminary data on tariffs and, where applicable, data on quantitative restrictions affecting these products will be re-issued as a Committee III document, for general distribution to contracting parties.¹

B. Summary of discussions

4. In discussing the drawing up of a further list of products to be examined by the Committee, representatives of less-developed countries emphasized that the examination to be undertaken in respect of these products should not detract from early action being taken by contracting parties to remove remaining barriers in respect of products included in Lists 1 to 3. Also, the decision to draw up a further list of products did not imply that the less-developed countries were fully satisfied with the progress which had been made in removing obstacles affecting products examined earlier. Concern was expressed by one member of the Committee that the examination of a further list of products would lead to a dissipation of the Committee’s efforts. In the view of his Government it would be more fruitful if the Committee would address itself to the removal of various types of barriers rather than to examine what action should be taken in respect of particular products. In view of the continuously growing number of products of export interest to less-developed countries, the addition of lists of products to be examined could be a never-ending process.

¹When re-issuing the document, account will be taken of corrections and amendments to Spec(63)283 and Add.1, brought to the notice of the secretariat.
5. While considering that, at the present time, it would be most practical to seek results in the removal of barriers to trade in relation to specific product categories, representatives of other less-developed countries emphasized that the list of products notified as being of special export interest to them should in no way be regarded as constituting a comprehensive listing of products currently of export interest to them, nor should it be understood that these were the only products in regard of which less-developed countries would like to see positive action being taken by the CONTRACTING PARTIES as regards work in progress or being undertaken in various subsidiary bodies of the GATT. For instance, such items as cereals and meat, which were of considerable export interest to a number of less-developed countries, did not appear in the list since solutions to problems affecting trade in these products were being examined in the Group on Cereals and the Group on Meat.

6. The Committee agreed that it should not dissipate its efforts in the pursuit of studies affecting a very large and continually growing range of products. Nevertheless, it was important that the Committee should give attention to all products of export interest to less-developed countries. Data regarding trade barriers and trade flows would need to be collected and would have to be constantly kept up-to-date on these products, so as to enable rapid headway to be made by the Committee when examining problems affecting trade in these commodities.

7. The Committee agreed, however, that in view of the significance of this aspect of the Committee's work, as it related to the envisaged enlargement of the list of products covered by the Action Programme, it seemed necessary to select, on reasons of urgency, those products from the larger list which should be examined in detail. On the basis of such a detailed examination, and clearly spelling out the Committee's findings in respect of each of the products concerned, as had been done earlier in respect of the products included in Lists 1 to 3, the Committee should be in a position to recommend, for adoption by the CONTRACTING PARTIES, further products to be covered by the Action Programme.
8. Having the above considerations in mind, and taking account of the fact that where barriers were predominantly in the form of tariffs it could be envisaged that a solution would be found in the context of the forthcoming trade negotiations, the less-developed countries selected thirty-seven products or product categories (seventy-eight tariff headings or sub-headings in terms of the Brussels Tariff Nomenclature) for examination by the Committee on a priority basis; it being understood that the other products should not be left aside. A list of the products selected is contained in Annex I to this report.

9. Taking account of the large number of products being added to the lists under consideration in Committee III and also of the need to proceed expeditiously, the Committee urged contracting parties to supply the secretariat, at their earliest convenience, with information on commercial policy measures applied by them on these products and with further relevant trade statistics.

\[1\] Subject to the qualification in paragraph 4 above.