NOTE ON THE MEETING OF THE WORKING PARTY
ON 1-3 MARCH 1971

1. The Working Party held its first meeting on 1-3 March 1971 under the chairmanship of Mr. H. Colliander (Sweden).

2. The following member countries were represented:

   Australia          Israel
   Austria            Japan
   Canada             Norway
   Denmark            Sweden
   European Communities and member States Switzerland
   Finland            United Kingdom
   United States

3. The discussion was concentrated on the first of the major tasks set out in the terms of reference of the Working Party, i.e. to prepare a preliminary report to the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products analyzing the tariff situation on the basis of the existing documentation. The second main task, the examination of the feasibility of analyzing and developing better measures of the effects on trade of tariffs and tariff changes, was because of shortage of time only briefly touched upon.

4. Proposals for further tabulations and analyses on the basis of the existing documentation were presented by United States (Spec(71)14), European Communities (Spec(71)15), Israel (Spec(71)16) and Japan (Spec(71)19).

5. It was agreed that the secretariat should prepare the tabulations II:A, B, C, D, and E of the United States proposal. In the preparation of tabulations II:A and C account should be taken of the three broad categories by degree of processing. The information to be covered by tabulations II:F and G of the United States proposal would be subsumed under tabulation II:D.

6. It was agreed that the tabulations under II:I and J of the United States proposal should be prepared for twenty-three categories and 119 sub-categories but, at present, not for BTN headings. They should for the time being be considered as working papers. The decision whether they should be annexed to the report to the Industrial Committee would be taken later. The United States reserved the right to request, if necessary in the Industrial Committee, that they be prepared, at a later stage, at BTN heading level for inclusion in the report.

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7. All three Israeli proposals were accepted. With regard to the third proposal (BTN items where developing countries supply more than 20 per cent of the imports), it was argued that such a tabulation could be subsumed under United States tabulation II:J; but, as this table would for the time being not be done at the BTN heading level, it was agreed to prepare the table separately (with figures for the first and third quartiles for BTN headings containing a large number of tariff lines).

8. The first proposal by Japan (listing of categories according to the difference between the highest average and the lowest one, etc.) was accepted, with the addition of a section incorporating similar data on the range of duties. The second proposal by Japan (frequency distribution), it was agreed, was covered by United States proposal II:C.

9. It was agreed that the secretariat should study, as proposed by the European Economic Community, problems involved in the preparation of a list indicating, for each country, for categories and sub-categories the number of bound tariff lines and imports under those items.

10. No decision was taken with regard to the use of medians.

11. With regard to f.o.b.-c.i.f. conversion the secretariat would request information from interested delegations and would if feasible prepare the necessary documentation. Otherwise the secretariat would revert to the matter at the next meeting.

12. It was further agreed that in preparation for the next meeting the secretariat should circulate to the members of the Working Party (a) technical notes on the additional tabulations that had been agreed upon and (b) a draft text describing and analyzing, on the basis of the existing documentation and the new tables, the tariff situation in a few sectors. This text would loosely follow the outline proposed by EEC.

13. In respect of the feasibility study, it was agreed that the secretariat in consultation with the permanent representatives of the member countries should prepare and circulate a questionnaire on the availability of relevant material in individual countries.

14. The next meeting of the Working Party would be held around mid-May on the understanding that the meeting would not be convened until three weeks after the circulation of the documentation agreed upon.