GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Working Party on Trade in Textiles

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST MEETING
Held on 10 and 11 July 1972

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Working Party held its first meeting on 10-11 July 1972 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Olivier Long. Apart from members of the Working Party the meeting was attended also by observers from certain contracting parties and intergovernmental organizations (see TEX/W/4). The following is a summary of the main points discussed.

Membership of the Working Party

2. The Council had agreed that the Working Party should be open to participation by all interested countries. As of 10 June, thirty-eight contracting parties (and the EEC Commission) and the three non-GATT countries participants in the Cotton Textiles Arrangement had indicated that they wished to be members of the Working Party (see L/3716/Add.1).

3. The Working Party was asked to consider whether any other non-GATT countries should be invited to take part in its work. In the absence of specific proposals in this regard the Working Party agreed to leave this point open so that any proposals might be examined at its next meeting.

Structure and coverage of the study

4. It was noted that the first task of the Working Party was to elaborate, within its terms of reference and in the light of the discussion in the Council, a detailed work programme and the contents of its study. The Working Party had before it a secretariat note (TEX/W/1) which was based on the Director-General's suggestions to the Council (see C/W/202/Rev.1) as well as the comments and specific proposals made by representatives at the Council meetings as reflected in C/W/77 and 78. The Working Party also received during the discussion written proposals from the delegations of the United States (TEX/W/2) and Japan (TEX/W/3).

5. During the discussion a large number of members of the Working Party offered comments and expressed views on various aspects of the programme, notably the following: geographic coverage of the study, the range of products to be included, the economic significance of the textile industry to developing countries, injury as a criterion in protecting domestic industry, the price factor in trade movements, the concentration of...
exports on particular markets, the upsurge of exports in particular items, the rate of growth of such particular exports, etc. Suggestions were also put forward by members on methodical aspects of the work, such as the unit of measurement to be used, the precise years for which statistics should be given, whether any questionnaires should be used, and so forth.

6. The Chairman, in summing up this discussion, noted that the written proposals before the Working Party (TEX/W/1, 2 and 3) and the comments and the suggestions that had been made by members at this meeting, would seem to have provided sufficient guidance for the secretariat to begin its work of preparing a draft of the study for examination by the Working Party. The relative importance to be placed on different sectors of the study and the extent to which some of the questions could be gone into in detail, might be decided as the study proceeded in light of the data available. Members of the Working Party would have an opportunity to comment on the way the matter was dealt with by the secretariat, and the Working Party could give new directives, after examining the first portion of the draft study in September.

Practical arrangements for the study

7. In view of the Council's desire to receive the Working Party's report by the end of the year, some members stressed the importance of expeditious action by the secretariat, the Working Party and all the governments concerned. Some other members pointed out that a comprehensive and indepth study might be difficult to accomplish within that time-limit. In the light of these views, it was agreed that the secretariat should proceed forthwith with the collection of the necessary information and the preparation of the draft. It should make use of all possible ways and means, including written and telegraphic communication, personal contacts and questionnaires, for the gathering of information. It was to be hoped that all governments and delegations would co-operate by responding promptly to any such requests for information.

8. In order to avoid any delays in communication, it was agreed that all members of the Working Party who considered it necessary or desirable and were in a position to do so should nominate a person as a contact point to whom all communications relating to the study would be addressed. This should preferably be a person fully conversant with the textile situation in his country.

9. It was agreed that the secretariat should aim at circulating a first portion of the draft early in September so that the Working Party could reconvene by 18-19 September and again, by 17-18 October.

Such directives might include the drawing up of a questionnaire if the data available by then should be found insufficient.