GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

Multilateral Trade Negotiations
Group "Agriculture"
Sub-Group on Meat

STATEMENT MADE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND
ON 6 JULY 1976

My delegation has been giving some thought to the way in which the Group could
usefully continue the consideration of all elements of all proposals.

We feel that it is useful at this stage to recall the purpose of the Group and
the reason for its establishment. This is to us quite clear. The Meat Sub-Group was
established in order that it might seek multilateral solutions to the problems in
world meat trade in accordance with the aims set out in the Tokyo Declaration of the
ever-greater expansion and liberalization of world trade.

Members of this Group will recall that at our first meeting about a year ago, we
agreed on a number of elements which would be dealt with initially. These included
elements in proposals relating to the liberalization of world beef trade; to its
stabilization; to special and differentiated treatment for developing countries and
to possible forms of international co-operation.

In this context I would remind members of this Group that at our first meeting
my delegation said that New Zealand saw the negotiations as encompassing initially all
frontier measures which have an impact on world meat flows, which in a number of
instances, could not be seen in isolation from the domestic support measures which lay
behind them. We then went on to list those measures of prime concern to us. We also
suggested that each participant should outline its approach, consistent with its own
policies, which was believed to contribute to the objectives of the negotiations. We
stated our willingness to explore all such approaches but pointed out that for our
part, we would be measuring all proposed approaches against the extent to which they
promoted the expansion and liberalization of trade in beef.

With regard to the question of security in world beef trade, we suggested that
there were three aspects which should be examined: first, the manner in which access
commitments could be secured; second, whether any specific safeguards provisions
were required or were appropriate to trade in meat; and third, the question of
whether some improved form of international monitoring and co-operation was needed.
At the second meeting, the Group began a series of examinations of individual country measures affecting the import and export of beef. My delegation has found this examination to be an extremely useful exercise which illustrates clearly the range and complexity of frontier measures affecting trade in beef. At that meeting we also received an elaboration of the approach suggested by the Community, which my delegation also found interesting. It was unfortunate, therefore, that at our third meeting, we did not go quite as far as discussing this approach as my delegation would have liked.

This, then, brings us to this meeting. I note from our agenda that we are to continue with the discussion of the various elements contained in proposals made at our first meeting, and that we would do so on the basis that in addition to discussing elements which might be the subject of multilateral treatment, we would also discuss those elements which might not be the subject of such treatment. I note also that delegations have been invited to submit lists of elements for consideration in this regard, however it appears that the appropriate time for this exercise has not yet arrived.

I have been referring to things we said at our first meeting. These are all contained in document MTN/ME/W/2. We regard this document as providing a clear outline of the elements we see as important in the work of the Group, and regard the contents of that document as continuing to provide the elements of the New Zealand approach and our ambitions for the negotiations on meat. We believe that, as MTN/ME/W/2 makes clear, this Group need not proceed on the basis of an either/or approach when considering different proposals. We believe that it is the task of this Group to consider all approaches and to reach a solution on the basis of all proposals.

I would suggest, therefore, that we should in fact, continue our discussion along the lines I have mentioned. I have indicated that we found the Community's suggestion interesting and would welcome further discussion on it. I have also reiterated those elements which New Zealand considered to be of importance in these negotiations. I would note that other delegations have similarly indicated elements of concern to them.

At this meeting, we should continue the discussion of all elements of all proposals. This could be directed towards establishing those elements which are common to all of us, so that we can proceed on the basis of some common ground. This might best be achieved by looking at all elements of all proposals in the context of the general aspirations of participants as expressed at our first meeting and as summarized in MTN/ME/1, paragraph 6. We would also, in this context, note the work going on in the other Groups and Sub-Groups of the MTN. A further point which we could well consider is one which my delegation also raised at our first meeting, and, that is the question of the basis from which we are negotiating. We
said at that first meeting that this delegation was not concerned, in this Group, to negotiate on the detail of the restrictive measures in force today, but rather to direct the negotiations to the time when conditions would approach some measure of normality, and to the rules of the game which should apply to secure those conditions. We continue to hold this view and would welcome discussion on this point during the course of this meeting.

Thus, as an example of what I mean, the approach suggested by the Community could be subjected to our measuring-rod of the continued expansion and liberalization of world trade, while our concerns regarding access could be considered in the light of the Community's joint discipline ambitions, and similarly for the approaches suggested by other participants. In this way we would hope that the form of the multilateral solutions that we are all striving for, might begin to take shape and might suggest the way in which our energies should be directed at future meetings of this Group.

In this context, and getting down to specific matters, I would recall that at an earlier meeting of this Group my delegation invited the Community to elaborate on several aspects of its proposal. I have noted we thought that the discussion at our last meeting did not go as far as we would have liked, and one of the reasons for our disappointment was that the replies on these points were not, in fact and in the circumstances of that meeting, able to be elaborated to quite the extent we would have liked.

To refresh the memory of the Group the points on which we sought elaboration from the Community were as follows:

(a) The statement that the experience of the recent past should not be confused with developments in the future. In seeking elaboration, we said that the one valid lesson of the past was that nothing was static, and already adjustments could be influenced by Government decisions however, and it was these which were important to the negotiations.

(b) The assertion that some producing countries could adjust more quickly to changes in demand. We asked which countries the Commission had in mind, and on what basis it had formed this conclusion - e.g. capacity for domestic consumption, preparedness to adjust etc.

(c) The assertion that world trade in meat was not a homogeneous sector, but comprised many heterogeneous products, each with different markets, conditioned, by different economic factors. In seeking elaboration, we suggested that the EEC had tended to overlook the inter-relationships between the various meat forms and their respective markets. For example if the Community decided to increase imports of live animals this would have an effect on the demand for imported meat, and it was not valid to treat meat and live animals in isolation.
(d) The assertion that world supply and demand were conditioned by consumer habits, and certain factors exogenous to the market (such as the overall impact of the recent economic recession on the demand side, and the availability of feedstuffs on the supply side). Again in requesting elaboration we suggested that the influence of such exogenous factors was most severe only when they were not permitted to be reflected in price adjustments which sustained a balance between supply and demand.

In addition, we would also be interested in elaboration by the Community of the elements raised by this delegation at our first meeting i.e. those elements relating to access and how the Community proposal can be considered as meeting our concerns on these issues and also if the Community could give us an indication of what they consider to be conditions approaching some measure of normality. It might also be useful, in pursuance of identifying common ground amongst us, and in order to help in identifying the basis for our negotiation, if other importers would also elaborate their positions on these issues.