

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

LDC/1

1 November 1963

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NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The attached minutes are forwarded on behalf of the Chairman of a group of representatives of the less-developed countries which met in Geneva on 29 October. The Chairman has asked me to draw your attention particularly to the penultimate paragraph of these minutes.

The next meeting of the group will be held in the Annex to the Villa Le Bocage at 10 a.m. on 11 November 1963.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
HELD IN THE PALAIS DES NATIONS ON 29 OCTOBER 1963

A meeting of the GATT Council of Representatives of the less-developed countries was held in the Palais des Nations on 29 October under the chairmanship of Ambassador K.B. Lall. The main subjects discussed were the following:

- (a) The programme of meetings (November-December 1963).
- (b) The need for less-developed countries taking initiative to prepare the studies required to expedite action on different matters of interest to them.

It was agreed that the programme of meetings fixed by the secretariat did not allow sufficient time in order that matters of interest to the less-developed countries may be fully considered and concrete proposals regarding action transmitted to the short session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES. It would, therefore, be desirable not to have this short session and utilize the time thus gained in further examining different subjects with a view to formulating definite proposals for action by developed countries. In that case, the schedule of meetings, as fixed by the secretariat, may stand as it is till 18 December. There could be a meeting of the Action Committee from 18-20 December and further meetings of the Committee on Legal and Institutional Framework and, if necessary, of other committees after that date.

It was, however, felt that some of the developed countries may not agree to the postponement or the abandonment of the short session, and therefore the following alternative regarding the changes in the programme of meetings was agreed to be suggested by the Chairman to the Council:

Trade Negotiations Committee for Less-Developed Countries	- 18-22 November (along with other Trade Negotiations Committee meetings)
✓ Working Party on Preferences	- 2-6 December (instead of the Committee on Cotton Textiles)
✓ Committee on Legal and Institutional Framework	- 9-13 December
Council	- 10-11 December
Action Committee	- 12-13 December
Committee on Cotton Textiles	- 16-20 December (along with the short session).

The Nigerian representative emphasized the need for calling a meeting of the Special Group on Tropical Products to review the situation arising out of the collapse of the Cocoa Conference. The Chairman agreed to propose to the Council the date suggested by the Nigerian delegate, i.e., 12-14 November, but pointed out that the meeting would be able to discuss the subject usefully only if the main consuming countries also participated in it. It would, therefore, be advisable for the Nigerian delegate to discuss the matter with some of the delegates of the main consuming countries and find out if the dates would suit them.

This meeting of the less-developed countries realized that the time at their disposal, before they can ask the developed countries to take further action was very short and it would, therefore, be desirable to complete, at their own initiative, some of the studies required and formulate plans of action as soon as possible. With this end in view the following countries undertook to specialize in the subjects mentioned against their names:

Sub-Committee I of Action Committee	
Primary Products	- Nigeria
Other Products	- Pakistan
Sub-Committee II	- Israel and Yugoslavia
Sub-Committee III	- India
Trade Negotiations Committee for Less-Developed Countries	- India and Yugoslavia
Working Party on Preferences and Financial Aspects	- United Arab Republic
Committee on Legal and Institutional Framework	- India
Committee III	- Peru and Ceylon
Finalization of the New List of Products of Interest to Less- Developed Countries	- Brazil, Peru, United Arab Republic and Ceylon.

In a clarification, the Chairman pointed out that the idea of specialization was meant mainly for carrying out studies of available material in order to expedite action and it did not, in any way, commit the Governments to the views that may be evolved by those who agreed to assist by specializing in the problems mentioned above.

The meeting also agreed to hold a weekly meeting every Monday from 10-12 hrs. of the less-developed countries in Geneva until the annual session towards the end of February. It was decided to request the GATT secretariat to make a room available for this purpose and provide interpretation and

secretarial facilities. A number of delegates pointed out difficulties in their preparing studies and their being able to attend weekly meetings because of the limitation of manpower at their disposal. It was, therefore, agreed that the Chairman should write to the Governments of the Member less-developed countries impressing upon them the importance of the work the GATT would be preoccupied with during the next two or three months and the need to have adequate and continuous representation at Geneva to cope with this work. The Chairman may also suggest to the Governments concerned the desirability of strengthening the missions at Geneva to enable the delegates to handle the work adequately.

It was decided that the next meeting of the less-developed countries would be held on Monday, 11 November 1963. It was pointed out by a number of delegates that it may not be possible for them to attend all the meetings. It was, however, felt that what was required was the continuity of the meetings so that the work is under constant review and it would not very much matter if all delegates are able to attend all the meetings. The minutes of these meetings will however be circulated to the permanent representatives of the less-developed countries who are members of the Action Committee.