

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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EXPANSION OF TRADE AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Ad Hoc Consultations on 25/26 October 1979

Chairman's Closing Statement

A large number of countries which are members of the Group of 77 and thus participants in the programme of ECDC and others were present at an ad hoc consultation on 25/26 October 1979 aimed at exploring how progress might be made with respect to the expansion of trade among developing countries on a global basis through a round of trade negotiations. The UNCTAD Secretariat, the ITC and some regional and sub-regional organizations were also represented.

A number of points were made in the discussion. These related to the rôle of negotiations on tariffs and other trade policy matters as part of the Programme of ECDC. Reference was also made, inter alia, to the need for an integrated approach to action on both trade policy matters and matters relating to production, finance and trade-related fields; effective co-operation between secretariats, including in particular the secretariats of GATT, UNCTAD, and UNIDO where appropriate; the importance of mutually supportive regional and sub-regional co-operation and the rôle of regional institutions; the need to take into account recommendations and conclusions emerging from sub-regional, regional and inter-regional meetings on ECDC; the balance and sharing of benefits among countries participating in the negotiations; effective special treatment for the least-developed countries; the taking into account of the special situation of the land-locked and island developing countries; objectives, scope and coverage of the negotiations and negotiating techniques; the need for a time-frame for the negotiations; effective preparatory work and technical assistance from the secretariats of GATT, UNCTAD, UNIDO and other agencies concerned, including operational support from UNDP.

Delegations supported the establishment of a Trade Negotiations Committee at the earliest possible date to prepare the guidelines and ground rules and procedures and to supervise the conduct of the negotiations.

Countries members of the Group of 77 reaffirmed that they regarded negotiations for expansion of trade among developing countries as constituting a part of the broader Programme of ECDC which they consider it their primary responsibility to negotiate and implement. They intend to continue further consultations with respect to these matters.

A secretariat note giving details of the proceedings, together with a list of the countries and organizations invited and present, will be circulated in due course.