

TARIFFS AND TRADE

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

Uruguay Round contract staff

Note by the Secretariat

1. In 1992, the Committee agreed at its meeting of 26 May that positions budgeted under the Uruguay Round be funded until 31 December 1993. Accordingly, the 50 staff (20 Professional; 30 General Service) recruited for the Round have had their contracts extended until that date.
2. The Committee took that decision in advance of its consideration of the annual budget for 1993, which it adopted at the end of October 1992. The Committee agreed that it was undesirable to leave a decision about Uruguay Round contracts until just two months before they were due to expire on 31 December 1992.
3. The Secretariat is again facing a similar situation, due to the continuing uncertainties surrounding the conclusion of the Round. Therefore, an assessment of the organization's needs after the Round, in particular of the need to retain permanently staff recruited for it, is difficult to make at this time, and may be no easier to make in October when the Committee considers the 1994 budget.
4. These staff will be needed as long as the Round continues, and beyond for the immediate follow-up. Also, given the breadth and complexity of the issues likely to remain with the GATT, it is reasonable to assume that the long term workload will be such that it will not be possible to return to pre-Round staffing levels. However, this will be dealt with in detail in the major organisational review that the Committee has directed the Secretariat carry out at the conclusion of the Round.
5. Accordingly, the Committee is invited to consider now, in advance of the budget hearings for 1994, extending the budgetary provisions for Uruguay Round positions.
6. The Committee may wish to take into account the factors outlined in the following paragraphs. These relate both to the interests of individuals and to the interests of the organization.
7. The staff recruited for the Round are of a high calibre and in many cases have developed very relevant expertise. Many are young and have the potential to go far; some of the future managers of the organisation will come from their ranks. It is important not to lose the investment already made in these staff.

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8. Many will shortly be entering their sixth year of service under Uruguay Round contracts. In the main, apart from the initial contracts which were for two years, they have been retained by a succession of short extensions. Keeping these staff on such uncertain terms over this period is obviously undesirable from a staff relations point of view.

9. There are also the cost considerations. There are costs associated with staff turnover: payments due to staff if they leave or if the budget of Uruguay Round posts is eliminated or reduced (redundancy), and costs associated with recruitment of replacements. The former are not wholly budgeted; any wholesale reduction in staff would require funds which have not so far been provided for. Recruitment costs to the extent vacancies are foreseeable are provided for, but not if those vacancies arise unexpectedly, for example from resignations. Therefore, from this point of view also, retention of the existing staff is in the interests of the organization.

10. The Secretariat therefore proposes that the decision on extension be taken at this time (see paragraph 5) and that the Committee agree that budgetary provisions for UR positions be authorized to the end of 1994.

11. In making this proposal, the Secretariat is, of course, making no judgement about when the Uruguay Round will end.

12. There are a total of 18,000 work/days of temporary assistance under the Uruguay Round budget, comprising twenty posts in the Professional category and thirty posts in the General Service category. The estimated cost of extending these posts through 1994 is Sw F 6,064,000, comprising salary and related charges.

13. Point for decision: paragraph 10