

URUGUAY ROUND

OF MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

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FIRST MEETINGS HELD ON SAFEGUARDS, SUBSIDIES AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Safeguards ... 10 March

Many delegations made clear, during this first meeting of the group, that the question of safeguards was centrally important to the Uruguay Round as a whole. The considerable history of negotiations on safeguards means that the main arguments are well-known - the negotiating plan for this group calls for the early tabling and discussion of specific suggestions. Debate centred around the questions of whether or not a safeguard agreement should be based upon the principle of non-discrimination; whether discussion should concentrate initially in particular areas such as the temporary nature and degressivity of safeguard measures, or on all elements from the start; and on the proliferation and status of so-called 'grey area' measures.

Subsidies ... 16-17 March

Discussion focussed particularly on the rules affecting subsidies on primary products. It was widely believed that the group would need to review fundamentally the nature and operation of the relevant articles of the General Agreement (VI and XVI) and of the Tokyo Round Subsidies Code. Initial proposals on the content of such a review were tabled by two countries. Many developing countries, who wished to participate fully in the subsidies negotiation, drew attention to the harmful effects on their exports of some countervailing duty practices. Also discussed were the respective roles of the subsidies and agriculture negotiating groups with respect to the treatment of subsidies affecting primary products.

MORE

Trade related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights ... 25 March

In the first discussion, comments were made about the relation between international trade, on the one hand, and the adequacy of the existing protection given to intellectual property rights (for example in terms of coverage and duration) as well as the effectiveness of the enforcement of such rights under existing national legislation on the other. Many participants also stressed the need to ensure that action to protect and enforce intellectual property rights did not give rise to barriers to legitimate trade. The extent to which and the way in which these various issues should be addressed in the Group was also discussed; some participants referred in this context to activities and initiatives in some other international organizations, such as World Intellectual Property Organization. In regard to trade in counterfeit goods, some delegations wished to base the work in this area upon the work of the GATT Group of Experts which reported in late 1985 and some also referred in this regard to the draft code circulated in 1982 as the result of work among some GATT countries. One suggestion was that this draft should be signed and implemented immediately as a first step in the negotiation.

Note to Editors

Press bulletins on the Uruguay Round will be issued regularly and are intended as an indication of the subject areas under discussion rather than as detailed accounts of negotiating positions. Journalists seeking further background information are invited to contact the GATT Information Service.

These accounts of negotiating meetings should be read in conjunction with the text of the Punta del Este Ministerial Declaration (GATT/1396 - 25 September 1986) and the decisions taken on 28 January this year regarding the negotiating structure, the negotiating plans and the surveillance of standstill and rollback (GATT/1405 - 5 February 1987). Further copies of these documents are available from the GATT Information Service.

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