

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE
Fourth Round of Tariff Negotiations

Statement made by H.E. Mr. Toru Hagiwara,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan
at the Public Session on 19 January 1956

It is a source of great satisfaction to my Government that this fourth round of tariff negotiations under the GATT should take place. I sincerely hope that these negotiations between twenty-six participating countries will constitute one step further towards the achievement of the GATT objective of lowering and stabilizing tariff levels. When Japan acceded to the GATT last year it initiated negotiations with seventeen contracting parties, thereby contributing its share to the attainment of the above-mentioned objective. Japan wishes to confirm its desire to co-operate in the lowering of tariff levels by participating in the negotiations which are opening.

However, my Government is in a clearly special position which I had occasion to explain to the Contracting Parties during their last session. Firstly, during negotiations which took place last year with seventeen countries Japan accorded a great number of concessions which it considered as constituting a maximum in respect of a great number of items of interest to those countries and the Japanese economy has not yet had time to adapt itself to the new tariff levels which were brought down just a few months ago. Secondly, the fourteen countries which resorted to Article XXXV will not wish to negotiate with Japan though their trade with Japan represents 40 per cent of our foreign trade. Lastly, the powers of the Government of the United States to lower tariffs by 15 per cent does not concern those items in respect of which higher concessions have been negotiated since 1 January 1955, and therefore the concessions which we could obtain from the United States are also limited.

Notwithstanding these special circumstances, my Government has stated that they were ready to enter into negotiations with any contracting parties wishing to negotiate with them. But only the Governments of the United States, Sweden and Ceylon have expressed such desire. My Government does not intend to limit the scope of the negotiations, but the circumstances which I have just explained impose upon them limitations which they very much regret.

I can assure you nevertheless that I shall do everything within my power to bring these negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion, and I am convinced that the special situation of my country will be given due consideration by all participating countries in particular by the Tariff Negotiations Committee which will be appointed.

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