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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Third Meeting of the Intergovernmental
Negotiating Team on the Treaty for the
Establishment of a Preferential Trade
Area in Eastern and Southern Africa

Addis Ababa, 27 February -- 5 March 1979

FINALIZATION OF THE REVISED LIST OF COMMODITIES
TO BE TRADED AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE
PREFERENTIAL TRADE AREA (PTA)

A Note by the Secretariat

1. In considering document ECA/MULPOC/Lusaka/121 regarding the "list of products of exports from, and imports by, individual countries that might be of interest to countries of Eastern and Southern Africa, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Team (INT) at its second meeting held in Mbabane from 30 November to 6 December 1978, noted that the analysis of the information based on the lists submitted by the member countries was rather inadequate in that:

- "(a) not all countries had submitted lists of products of export/import interest to them;
- (b) the information submitted by some member countries in respect of their export/import interest products was incomplete;
- (c) some of the countries had overlooked certain products in preparing the lists of products of export interest to them; and
- (d) some of the export lists submitted by member countries inadvertently contained products which were actually re-exports from those countries".

2. In implementing the decision of the extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Lusaka MULPOC in March 1978, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Team agreed that all countries should submit to ECA revised lists of products of export/import interest to them not later than 31 January 1979, giving in respect of each product adequate description (including their CCCF and SITC codes), quantities likely to be exported/imported, and tariff and non-tariff barriers. The INT further agreed that after preliminary analysis by the Secretariat, with a view to recommending tariff reductions or eliminations where feasible and appropriate, the revised lists should later be submitted for its consideration under one of its agenda items which was agreed as "finalization of the revised list of commodities to be traded".

3. Considering that not all member countries had attended the INT meeting in Mbabane, and to ensure that all the relevant information was received in time for analysis before the next meeting (from 27 February to 5 March 1979), the Secretariat sent cable messages to all member countries during the third week of December 1978, requesting them to submit their revised lists together with all the information agreed upon during the Mbabane meeting not later than 15 January 1979. At the end of January 1979, responses (some of them lacking essential details) had been received from only five countries, as a result of which further cables were sent to member countries urging them to forward their lists in time.

4. The INT may wish to note that in spite of these efforts, only six countries had responded to our request by 15 February 1979. Moreover, most of the lists received are either incomplete or lacking in essential details (e.g. tariff and non-tariff barriers, quantities estimated for import and export, etc.). The Secretariat has therefore not been in a position to undertake the analysis required for the purpose of identifying a common list of products to be traded within the proposed Preferential Trade Area as requested at the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Team on the Treaty for the Establishment of a Preferential Trade Area in Eastern and Southern Africa which was held in Mbabane from 30 November to 6 December 1978. The Secretariat is also unable at this stage to recommend appropriate tariff reductions or eliminations on the respective goods.

6. In the circumstances the INT may wish to advise what further action needs to be taken with a view to finalizing the list of commodities bearing in mind that the Lusaka MULPOC Council of Ministers in considering this subject during its second meeting held in Nairobi from 1 to 2 February 1979 decided, that "consideration of lists of commodities to be traded within the framework of FTA" be undertaken at the fourth meeting of the INT to be held in June 1979.