

New Chairman's Proposal on Market Access

Editor's note: Negotiators are considering the following changes to the Chairman's draft on market access.

- In line 3, the language being considered now talks about “progressive” elimination of peak tariffs rather than elimination of peak tariffs “where possible.”
- In a second change, the text now says that negotiators should seek to improve market access for all members, “specifically the developing countries.” The initial text mentioned access to markets “for all members.”

3 December 1999

Working Group on Market Access

Note from the Chairman

As agreed at the meeting of the Working Group on Market Access on 1 December 1999, I have been carrying out consultations with delegations on an on-going basis on the text on Market Access negotiations. The same day, I circulated a Chairman's draft, which I have now amended in light of comments received by delegations. I herewith circulate this text to you.

As agreed at the same meeting, I also attach a text on Services, which I believe will be a basis for consensus.

3 December 1999
0300 am

Chairman's proposal

Market Access Negotiations on Non-Agricultural Products

[Market access negotiations shall cover all non-agricultural products without a priori exclusion and aim at the broadest possible liberalization through the substantial reduction of tariffs, as well as the reduction and where possible elimination of peak tariffs and tariff escalation to improve access to markets for all Members. The negotiations shall aim at increasing transparency and predictability through a significant expansion of the scope of tariff bindings, and through simplifying Members' tariffs. Other issues, as agreed, may be taken up during the course of the negotiations.

Negotiations shall aim at the reduction or elimination of non-tariff measures that restrict or distort trade and undermine the effectiveness and benefits of negotiated market access liberalization.

The modalities for the conduct of the negotiations may encompass one or a combination of methods such as request/offer, formula and approaches which do not exclude the possibility of deeper reduction or elimination of tariffs for specific products or product groups to be undertaken by interested participants. The bound rates, and where there are no bound rates, base rates to be agreed shall be used as the basis of negotiations. The negotiations shall take account of any autonomous liberalization undertaken by Members since the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and credit shall be given for it according to modalities to be developed.

Negotiations shall be guided by the special and differential treatment as provided for in Part IV of GATT 1994 and the Enabling Clause with a view to securing additional benefits for the trade of developing country Members, and allowing for flexibility in the concessions requested from them and in the implementation of the results. In this context, as concerns the treatment of least developing country Members, reference is also made to paragraph [72(a)] of the Ministerial Declaration.]