

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Fourteenth Session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES

REQUEST BY ISRAEL FOR ACCESSION TO GATT

A very large number of delegations offered a warm welcome when Israel's request to accede to the General Agreement was put forward in plenary session on 14 May 1959.

The request for accession was supported by a statement by Mr. Moshe Bartur, Assistant Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who emphasized the important role which foreign trade plays in the economy of Israel and stressed the importance which Israel attaches to free access to foreign markets. In recent years, he said, Israel had adopted measures designed to liberalize and multilateralize its foreign trade and is determined to continue in this direction in conformity with the principles of GATT. He added that Israel has consistently accorded most-favoured-nation treatment to all members of GATT. (The full text of Mr. Moshe Bartur's statement is issued in press release GATT/447).

Earlier, in introducing the request of Israel to accede, the Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, Mr. Garcia-Oldini, commented that it was most appropriate that the subject should come up on 14 May 1959 which was the eleventh anniversary of the establishment of Israel's independence.

After hearing the views of delegations the CONTRACTING PARTIES decided to remit the request of Israel for accession to a working party which will present its recommendations later in this session.

Two delegations reserved their positions. The delegate of Pakistan said that he was instructed to oppose the request for accession and that, if accession was approved, his government intended to invoke Article XXXV, thereby refraining from undertaking GATT obligations towards Israel. The delegate of Indonesia stated that his government reserved its position.

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