

4-11-1989

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Recommended Citation

Neagle, John. "Recent Developments In Gatt Talks." (1989). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/notisur/2977>

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Recent Developments In Gatt Talks

by John Neagle

Category/Department: General

Published: Tuesday, April 11, 1989

On April 8, David Woods, spokesperson for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, said delegates in Geneva had adopted a compromise accord in closed-door sessions on textile exports and other issues. Negotiations had been stalemated over disputes related to agricultural supports, textiles, intellectual property (e.g., patents), and safeguards against sudden increases in imports. On Saturday, 100 nations signed an accord on settlements in these areas. The agreement is to serve as a framework for future negotiations. The April 8 accord resolved European Economic Community objections to earlier draft language that the 12-nation group claimed would lift textile and clothing import barriers too rapidly. The current GATT talks, known as the Uruguay Round, began in 1986, and are scheduled to continue through 1990. Settlements in the other 11 areas of negotiations were reached in December at a meeting in Montreal. On April 7, the EEC announced it had reached an agreement with the US on the issue of farm supports. The settlement, said the EEC, was made possible after Washington dropped its demand for the elimination of all farm subsidies. This agreement calls for an across-the-board freeze on farm supports and import barriers through 1990. Next, it states that in 1990, countries must reduce their subsidies, but does not indicate by how much. According to Salvador Cue Silva, president of the Textile Industry Chamber in the Mexican states of Puebla and Tlaxcala, the Uruguay Round talks will permit a 6% increase in Mexican textile exports. (Basic data from AP, Notimex, 04/08/89)

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