

ARTICLE VIII AND ARTICLE XIV

Payments Restrictions

PAYMENTS RESTRICTIONS FOR SECURITY REASONS: FUND JURISDICTION

Article VIII, Section 2(a), in conformity with its language, applies to all restrictions on current payments and transfers, irrespective of their motivation and the circumstances in which they are imposed. Sometimes members impose such restrictions solely for the preservation of national or international security. The Fund does not, however, provide a suitable forum for discussion of the political and military considerations leading to actions of this kind. In view of the fact that it is not possible to draw a precise line between cases involving only considerations of this nature and cases involving, in whole or in part, economic motivations and effects for which the Fund does provide the appropriate forum for discussion, and the further fact that the Fund must exercise the jurisdiction conferred by the Fund Agreement in order to perform its duties and protect the legitimate interests of its members, the following policy decision is taken:

1. A member intending to impose restrictions on payments and transfers for current international transactions that are not authorized by Article VII, Section 3(b) or Article XIV, Section 2 of the Fund Agreement and that, in the judgment of the member, are solely related to the preservation of national or international security, should, whenever possible, notify the Fund before imposing such restrictions. Any member may obtain a decision of the Fund prior to the imposition of such restrictions by so indicating in its notice, and the Fund will act promptly on its request. If any member intending to impose such restrictions finds that circumstances preclude advance notice to the Fund, it should notify the Fund as promptly as circumstances permit, but ordinarily not later than 30 days after imposing such restrictions. Each notice received in accordance with this decision will be circulated immediately to

PAYMENTS RESTRICTIONS

the Executive Directors. Unless the Fund informs the member within 30 days after receiving notice from the member that it is not satisfied that such restrictions are proposed solely to preserve such security, the member may assume that the Fund has no objection to the imposition of the restrictions.

2. The Fund will review the operation of this decision periodically and reserves the right to modify or revoke, at any time, the decision or the effect of the decision on any restrictions that may have been imposed pursuant to it.

Decision No. 144-(52/51)
August 14, 1952

BILATERALISM AND CONVERTIBILITY

1. This decision records the Fund's views on the use of bilateral arrangements.

2. Fund policies and attitude on bilateral arrangements which involve the use of exchange restrictions and represent limitations on a multilateral system of payments are an integral part of its policy on restrictions. This policy aims at the elimination of foreign exchange restrictions and the earliest possible establishment of a multilateral system of payments in respect of current transactions between members. The Fund's policies and procedures on such restrictions rest on Articles I, VIII and XIV of the Fund Agreement.

3. Certain members have already taken steps to reduce their dependence on bilateral arrangements, but many members still use them. The Fund welcomes the reduced reliance on these arrangements and believes that the improvement in the international payments situation makes it less necessary for members to rely on such arrangements. The Fund urges the full collaboration of all its members to reduce and to eliminate as rapidly as practicable reliance on bilateralism. In this respect the Fund recommends close cooperation of those who plan to make their currencies convertible in the near future. Unless this policy is energetically pursued by all

countries, both convertible and inconvertible, there is serious risk that widespread restrictions, particularly of a discriminatory character, will persist. Moreover, the persistence of bilateralism may impede the attainment and maintenance of convertibility. This whole problem is one not only for countries which maintain bilateral arrangements but also for other countries whose domestic and foreign economic policies may adversely affect the balance of payments of other members.

4. The Fund will have discussions with its members on their need to retain existing bilateral arrangements or their ability to facilitate the reduction of bilateral arrangements by other countries. During the coming year, the Fund will explore with all countries which are parties to bilateral arrangements which involve the use of exchange restrictions the need for the continuation of these arrangements, the possibilities of their early removal, and ways and means, including the use of the Fund's resources, by which the Fund can assist in this process. In its examination of the justification for reliance on such bilateral arrangements the Fund will, without excluding other considerations, have particular regard to the payments position and prospects of the members concerned.

Decision No. 433-(55/42)
June 22, 1955

OFFICIAL CLEARING AND PAYMENTS ARRANGEMENTS—
TEMPORARY EXEMPTION FROM THREE-MONTH RULE

Pending completion of the forthcoming review of the jurisdictional aspects of official clearing and payments arrangements, the Fund shall not object to the maintenance in existing official clearing or payments arrangements of settlement provisions that do not require the settlement of balances at least as frequently as every three months if such provisions were in force before July 1, 1994.

Decision No. 10749-(94/67)
July 20, 1994

RETENTION QUOTAS: DECISION AND LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

In concluding consultations on restrictions on current payments and transfers as required under Article XIV of the Fund Agreement, the Fund postponed consideration of retention quotas and similar practices through which some members have sought to improve their earnings of specific currencies. The Fund has now examined these practices more fully than was possible at the consultations referred to above. The Fund has extended this examination to cover the terms of reference of the resolution adopted on September 9, 1952, by the Board of Governors and has come to the following conclusions:

1. Members should work toward and achieve as soon as feasible the removal of these retention quotas and similar practices, particularly where they lead to abnormal shifts in trade which cause unnecessary damage to other countries. Members should endeavor to replace these practices by more appropriate measures leading to currency convertibility.

2. The Fund will enter into consultation with each of the members concerned with a view to agreeing on a program for the implementation of 1 above, including appropriate attention to timing of any action which may be decided upon.

3. The Fund does not object to those practices which, by their nature, can be regarded as devices designed solely to simplify the administration of official exchange allocations.

The Managing Director is asked to send the following letter to all members in transmitting the foregoing decision on retention quotas and similar practices:

The Fund has made a detailed study concerning retention quotas and other similar practices pursuant to the resolution passed at the Seventh Session of the Board of Governors in Mexico in September 1952. I am pleased to transmit herewith a decision of the Executive Board of the Fund based on this study.

The Fund has concluded that these practices stem from widespread difficulties presently existing in the international payments position of many countries. The Fund's consideration of this subject has shown that what is referred to as "retention quotas and similar practices" covers a wide range of exchange measures. Certain practices under this heading may be unobjectionable from the point of view of Fund policies. Other practices in this category, however, appear to result in adverse effects on exchange stability and to cause unnecessary damage to member countries. They also may lead to the adoption of retaliatory measures. The interest of the Fund in these matters clearly follows from the terms of Article VIII containing the general obligations of members with respect to the avoidance of exchange restrictions, discriminatory currency arrangements, and multiple currency practices, and Article XIV dealing with these exchange measures during the transitional period.

In dealing with retention quotas and similar practices, the Board has not intended to change existing Fund standards and procedures with respect to exchange restrictions, discriminatory currency arrangements, and multiple currency practices. Specifically, there was no intention to affect the existing requirements of prior consultation and approval with respect to measures of this character. Those requirements, so far as they concern multiple currency practices, were communicated to members in the Fund's letter of December 19, 1947 (Appendix II of the Fund's *Annual Report* of 1948). Accordingly, it is expected that members intended to maintain, introduce, or enlarge those retention quotas and similar practices which constitute exchange restrictions, multiple currency practices, or discriminatory currency arrangements will act in accordance with existing Fund requirements.

The decision recognizes that it is not practicable to deal with all of these practices on a general basis. The Fund, therefore, wishes to deal with these arrangements on a case-to-case basis. We shall communicate as quickly as practicable with members using

these practices. We are confident that members will cooperate in these individual discussions in order to enable the Fund to reach appropriate conclusions.

Decision No. 201-(53/29)
May 4, 1953

DISCRIMINATION FOR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS REASONS

The following decision deals exclusively with discriminatory restrictions imposed for balance of payments reasons.

In some countries, considerable progress has already been made towards the elimination of discriminatory restrictions; in others, much remains to be done. Recent international financial developments have established an environment favorable to the elimination of discrimination for balance of payments reasons. There has been a substantial improvement in the reserve positions of the industrial countries in particular and widespread moves to external convertibility have taken place.

Under these circumstances, the Fund considers that there is no longer any balance of payments justification for discrimination by members whose current receipts are largely in externally convertible currencies. However, the Fund recognizes that where such discriminatory restrictions have been long maintained, a reasonable amount of time may be needed fully to eliminate them. But this time should be short and members will be expected to proceed with all feasible speed in eliminating discrimination against member countries, including that arising from bilateralism.

Notwithstanding the extensive moves toward convertibility, a substantial portion of the current receipts of some countries is still subject to limitations on convertibility, particularly in payments relations with state-trading countries. In the case of these countries the Fund will be prepared to consider whether balance of payments considerations would justify the maintenance of some degree of discrimination, although not as between countries having externally convertible

currencies. In this connection the Fund wishes to reaffirm its basic policy on bilateralism as stated in its decision of June 22, 1955.

Decision No. 955-(59/45)

October 23, 1959

ARTICLE VIII AND ARTICLE XIV

There has been in recent years a substantial improvement in the balance of payments and the reserve positions of a number of Fund members which has led to important and widespread moves to the external convertibility of many currencies. Most international transactions are now carried on with convertible currencies, and many countries have progressed far with the removal of restrictions on payments. In consequence of these developments, it seems likely that a number of members of the Fund either have reached or are nearing a position in which they can consider the feasibility of formally accepting the obligations of Article VIII, Sections 2, 3, and 4. Previous decisions taken by the Fund, such as those on multiple currency practices, bilateral arrangements, discriminatory restrictions maintained for balance of payments purposes, and payments restrictions for security reasons, indicate the Fund's attitude on these matters. The present decision has been adopted as an additional guide to members in pursuance of the purposes of the Fund as set forth in Article I of the Articles of Agreement.

1. Article VIII provides in Sections 2 and 3 that members shall not impose or engage in certain measures, namely restrictions on the making of payments and transfers for current international transactions, discriminatory currency arrangements, or multiple currency practices, without the approval of the Fund. The guiding principle in ascertaining whether a measure is a restriction on payments and transfers for current transactions under Article VIII, Section 2, is whether it involves a direct governmental limitation on the availability or use of exchange as such. Members in doubt as to whether any of their measures do or do not fall under Article VIII may wish to consult the Fund thereon.

2. In accordance with Article XIV, Section 3,* members may at any time notify the Fund that they accept the obligations of Article VIII, Sections 2, 3, and 4, and no longer avail themselves of the transitional provisions of Article XIV. Before members give notice that they are accepting the obligations of Article VIII, Sections 2, 3, and 4, it would be desirable that, as far as possible, they eliminate measures which would require the approval of the Fund, and that they satisfy themselves that they are not likely to need recourse to such measures in the foreseeable future. If members, for balance of payments reasons, propose to maintain or introduce measures which require approval under Article VIII, the Fund will grant approval only where it is satisfied that the measures are necessary and that their use will be temporary while the member is seeking to eliminate the need for them. As regards measures requiring approval under Article VIII and maintained or introduced for nonbalance of payments reasons, the Fund believes that the use of exchange systems for nonbalance of payments reasons should be avoided to the greatest possible extent, and is prepared to consider with members the ways and means of achieving the elimination of such measures as soon as possible. Members having measures needing approval under Article VIII should find it useful to consult with the Fund before accepting the obligations of Article VIII, Sections 2, 3, and 4.

3. If members at any time maintain measures which are subject to Sections 2 and 3 of Article VIII, they shall consult with the Fund with respect to the further maintenance of such measures. Consultations with the Fund under Article VIII are not otherwise required or mandatory. However, the Fund is able to provide technical facilities and advice, and to this end, or as a means of exchanging views on monetary and financial developments, there is great merit in periodic discussions between the Fund and its members even though no questions arise involving action under Article VIII. Such discussions would be planned between the Fund and the member, including agreement on place and timing, and would ordinarily take place at intervals of about one year.

*Corresponds to Article XIV, Section 1 of the Articles of Agreement after the Second Amendment.

4. Fund members which are contracting parties to the GATT and which impose import restrictions for balance of payments reasons will facilitate the work of the Fund by continuing to send information concerning such restrictions to the Fund. This will enable the Fund and the member to join in an examination of the balance of payments situation in order to assist the Fund in its collaboration with the GATT. The Fund, by agreement with members which are not contracting parties to the GATT and which impose import restrictions for balance of payments reasons, will seek to obtain information relating to such restrictions.

Decision No. 1034-(60/27)

June 1, 1960

Payments Arrears

The Executive Board has reviewed the Fund's policy with respect to payments arrears. The Fund shall be guided by the approach in the conclusions set forth [below].

Decision No. 3153-(70/95)

October 26, 1970

Conclusions

1. Undue delays in the availability or use of exchange for current international transactions that result from a governmental limitation give rise to payments arrears and are payments restrictions under Article VIII, Section 2(a), and Article XIV, Section 2. The limitation may be formalized, as for instance compulsory waiting periods for exchange, or informal or ad hoc.

2. The need for the Fund to define its policy on payments arrears is emphasized by the fact that restrictions resulting in payments arrears arising from informal or ad hoc measures do particular harm to a country's international financial relationships because of the

uncertainty they generate. This uncertainty is particularly harmful to the smooth functioning of the international payments system and has pronounced adverse effects on the creditworthiness of the debtor country which may extend beyond the period of the existence of the restrictions.

3. In the light of these considerations it is believed that the Fund should aim in consultation reports at a more systematic treatment of restrictions on payments and transfers for current international transactions that produce payments arrears. In all cases where payments arrears arise from a governmental limitation on, or interference with, the availability of foreign exchange at the time a payment for a current international transaction falls due, or with the timely transfer of the proceeds of such transactions, the payments arrears should be treated in the consultation papers as evidence of a payments restriction requiring approval in Article VIII or Article XIV consultation decisions. The staff, in the consultation discussions, will have to establish whether payments arrears exist by ascertaining whether there has been a substantial delay beyond that usually required for ascertaining the bona fides of exchange applications or the time that can be regarded as normally required for the administrative processing of applications for exchange. If payments arrears exist and approval of the restriction giving rise to them is requested by the member, the member should be expected to submit a satisfactory program for their elimination. Approval if given should be only for a temporary period and generally with a fixed terminal date. Because of the difficulty in surveillance, approval should be wherever feasible in terms of the level of arrears outstanding. The program for the elimination of the payments arrears should provide for a maximum permissible delay to which a payment or transfer could be subjected, together with a phased reduction in the outstanding level.

4. . . . *

*See page 94.

Payments Policies

CONSULTATIONS ON MEMBERS' POLICIES IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

1. The Committee on Reform of the International Monetary System and Related Issues on January 18, 1974 reviewed important recent developments and agreed that, in the present difficult circumstances, all members, in managing their international payments, must avoid the adoption of policies which would merely aggravate the problems of other members. Accordingly, the Committee stressed the importance of avoiding competitive depreciation and the escalation of restrictions on trade and payments; and emphasized the importance of pursuing policies that would sustain appropriate levels of economic activity and employment, while minimizing inflation. It was also recognized that recent developments would create serious payments difficulties for many developing countries. The Committee agreed that there should be the closest international cooperation and consultation in pursuit of these objectives.

2. The Executive Directors call on all members to collaborate with the Fund in accordance with Article IV, Section 4(a),* with a view to attaining these objectives. The consultations of the Fund on the policies that members are following in present circumstances will be conducted with a view to the attainment of these objectives.

Decision No. 4134-(74/4)
January 23, 1974

*Refers to the Articles of Agreement in effect before the Second Amendment.

Multiple Currency Practices

STATEMENT TO MEMBERS TRANSMITTING FUND'S DECISIONS ON MULTIPLE CURRENCY PRACTICES

The letter to members concerning multiple currency practices and the accompanying statement of the Fund's decisions with respect to such practices are agreed as revised (Executive Board Document No. 235, Revision 2) and shall be sent without delay to all members. The texts of earlier decisions on the same subject are modified as necessary to correspond with the agreed statement.

*Decision No. 237-2
December 18, 1947*

Letter to Members

December 19, 1947

To All Members:

During the past several months the Fund has been giving special consideration to multiple currency practices. I am writing to all of the members today in order to acquaint them with the results of our considerations. Enclosed is a memorandum containing the pertinent decisions taken by the Executive Board. These set forth the general lines of the Fund's policies toward multiple currency practices which the Fund has adopted to date, together with the obligations of the members and the jurisdiction of the Fund upon which the development of Fund policy will necessarily be based.

We intend, as rapidly as may be possible under the circumstances, to discuss with each member now engaging in a multiple currency practice how this general policy will be applied to its individual problems. In the meantime, all of the members are requested to be

guided by the enclosed memorandum and to initiate with the Fund discussions of any pressing problems which may arise.

Sincerely yours,

GUTT

Managing Director

Multiple Currency Practices

This memorandum contains the decisions the Fund has so far taken concerning its policies toward multiple currency practices, and clarification of its jurisdiction with respect to such practices.

The exchange systems of the members who engage in multiple currency practices are frequently complex. For this reason various difficulties will be involved in the modification and removal of the practices, and the policy of the Fund in this regard must develop progressively as its consultations with the members concerned reveal problems which might otherwise be overlooked. The policies set forth below have been agreed as a basis for the initiation of discussions with the members affected:

I. *Policies*

A. *General*

1. *Consultation.* There should be continuing consultation on multiple currency practices between the Fund and the members concerned. Members should, as a minimum, consult the Fund before introducing a multiple currency practice, before making a change in any of the multiple rates of exchange, before reclassifying transactions subject to different rates, and before making any other type of significant change in their exchange systems.

2. *Stability and Restrictions.* In most cases multiple currency practices are both systems of exchange rates and restrictions

on payments and transfers for current international transactions. Whenever it is inconvenient to deal with both aspects of such multiple currency practice simultaneously, priority should be given to those features which affect exchange stability and orderly exchange arrangements among members.

3. *Removal.* Early steps should be taken toward the removal of multiple currency practices which are clearly not necessary for balance of payments reasons. In such cases, ample time should be provided for members to take the necessary steps and to install appropriate substitutes where necessary.

The Fund will encourage members engaging in multiple currency practices for balance of payments reasons to establish as soon as possible conditions which would permit their removal, with the general objective of seeking removal not later than the end of the transitional period.

Where complete removal by the end of the transitional period proves impossible, the Fund will assist the members concerned to eliminate the most dangerous aspects of their multiple currency practices and to exercise reasonable control over those retained.

B. *Specific Practices*

1. *Fixed Exchange Rates.* When a multiple currency system includes fixed exchange rates, members should consult with the Fund on any changes in their practices, whether such changes concern the rates of exchange or the classification of transactions subject to particular practices. Should the step contemplated by a member be a part of a program made in agreement with the Fund, the member could, of course, act without prior consultation.

When a multiple rate system is used for restrictions on current and capital transactions, the elimination of the restriction on current transactions would be highly commendable even though restrictions on capital transactions might have to be retained.

2. *Taxes on Exchange Drafts.* The use by members of taxes on exchange drafts resulting in an unusually large difference between buying and selling rates for a currency is not in accord with the objectives of the Fund Agreement and the Fund shall, in consultation with members concerned, seek the elimination of such practices as rapidly as practicable.

3. *Fluctuating Rates of Exchange*

(a) *Free Markets.* When a multiple currency practice includes a free market with a fluctuating rate, the member should agree with the Fund on the scope of the transactions permitted to take place in that market. Any changes in the scope of these transactions should, of course, be subject to agreement with the Fund. The objective should be to eliminate the fluctuations in the free market as soon as such action is reasonably practicable. When it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate such fluctuations, the Fund will encourage members to exclude current transactions from the free market to the extent that this would be reasonable in the circumstances of each case.

(b) *The Auction System*

(i) The purpose for which an auction system is to be used should be agreed with the Fund and any change in its scope should be agreed with the Fund. The fewer the transactions subject to the auction rate, and the less essential the goods involved, the better.

(ii) Depending upon the circumstances, the monetary authorities should undertake to keep the auction rate stable, or to maintain it within certain limits, or to make every effort to prevent brisk fluctuations.

(iii) Wherever auction rates exist or are proposed, circumstances should be examined in order to determine whether a fixed rate should be substituted for the auction rate.

(iv) If, as is usually the case where an auction system exists, a reduction of the money supply is desirable, the proceeds of the auction market should be directed toward this end.

II. *Jurisdiction of the Fund*

Multiple currency practices, besides being in most cases restrictive practices, also constitute systems of exchange rates. Since exchange stability depends on effective rates, the general purposes of the Fund and the members' undertakings of Article IV, Section 4(a)* "to collaborate with the Fund to promote exchange stability, to maintain orderly exchange arrangements with other members, and to avoid competitive exchange alterations" are fundamental considerations in an interpretation of the rights and obligations of members under Article XIV, Section 2 or Article VIII, Section 3, to maintain, introduce, or adapt multiple currency practices. Subject to these general principles, the following conclusions are agreed with respect to the Fund's jurisdiction and the obligations of members.

A. *Practices Subject to Article VIII, Section 3*

1. *Maintenance.* A member maintaining multiple currency practices at the time the Agreement entered into force, if it does not take advantage of Article XIV, is required by Article VIII, Section 3, to consult with the Fund for their progressive removal or obtain the Fund's approval for their maintenance.

2. *Introduction.* Members that have not been occupied by the enemy, and former enemy-occupied members which have not taken advantage of the transitional arrangements, whether or not they have existing multiple rate practices, may introduce a new practice only under Article VIII, Section 3, which provides expressly for the necessity of approval by the Fund.

*Refers to the Articles of Agreement in effect before the Second Amendment.

3. *Adaptation.* If a multiple currency practice is in force by virtue of Article VIII, Section 3, the member may change or adapt such practice only after consulting with the Fund and obtaining its approval.

4. *Reclassification.* Members maintaining multiple currency practices under Article VIII, Section 3, may reclassify commodities subject to the practices only after consultation with the Fund and Fund approval.

B. *Practices Subject to Article XIV, Section 2*

1. *Restrictive Nature.* Multiple currency practices, when applied to current international transactions, constitute a type of restriction on payments and transfers for current international transactions for the purposes of Article XIV, Section 2.

2. *Representations by the Fund.* The following language in Article XIV, Section 4* of the Fund Agreement:

“The Fund may, if it deems such action necessary in exceptional circumstances, make representations to any member that conditions are favorable for the withdrawal of any particular restriction, or for the general abandonment of restrictions, inconsistent with the provisions of any other article of this Agreement.”

(a) applies at any time after the entry into force of the Fund Agreement and

(b) gives to the Fund the power to determine what is meant by “in exceptional circumstances.”

3. *Maintenance.* Members may maintain multiple currency practices during the transitional period under the provisions of Article XIV, Section 2, but only if the maintenance of such prac-

*Corresponds to Article XIV, Section 3 of the Articles of Agreement after the Second Amendment.

tices is necessary for settling members' balance of payments in a manner which does not unduly encumber their access to the resources of the Fund. Members are under a duty to withdraw such practices as soon as they are able without them to settle their balance of payments in a manner which will not unduly encumber their access to the resources of the Fund. Moreover, under Section 4 of Article XIV,^{*} the Fund has certain powers to make representations in exceptional circumstances, of which it is the judge, that conditions are favorable for the withdrawal of any particular restriction. The Fund may exercise this power even if a particular restriction is justified for balance of payments reasons, if the conditions are favorable for the substitution of some practice which is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Agreement.

4. *Introduction.* Only former enemy-occupied members, which are availing themselves of the transitional provisions, and then whether or not they have existing multiple currency practices, may introduce a new multiple currency practice under Article XIV, Section 2, provided the Fund agrees with the member that the practice is necessary and does not find that it is inconsistent with the purposes of the Fund Agreement or with Article IV, Section 4(a).^{*}

5. *Adaptation.* A member maintaining multiple currency practices under Article XIV may adapt the existing restrictions, provided such action is consistent with the obligations of Article IV, Section 4(a)^{*} and the Fund is satisfied that the adaptation is dictated by "changing circumstances." A duty to consult with and obtain the approval of the Fund before changing the practice is implicit in both Article IV, Section 4(a)^{*} and in Article XIV, Section 2. The Fund has the power under Article XIV, Section 4,^{**} to represent in exceptional circumstances that circumstances are favorable to withdrawal of a proposal to change an existing multiple currency practice.

^{*}Refers to the Articles of Agreement in effect before the Second Amendment.

^{**}Corresponds to Article XIV, Section 3 of the Articles of Agreement after the Second Amendment.

6. *Reclassification.* A member maintaining multiple currency practices under Article XIV may reclassify commodities subject to such practices, under the power to adapt restrictions in Section 2 of Article XIV, and under the same conditions, provided, however, that under the existing restrictions the effective rates are other than parity.

C. *Exchange Taxes*

When a tax affects an obligation undertaken by the members of the Fund, the relationship between the tax and the obligation is of direct concern to the Fund and subject to its jurisdiction. Whenever exchange taxes are used to modify par values, create multiple currency practices, or introduce restrictive exchange controls, they are subject to the Fund's jurisdiction. The Fund has authority to deal with these exchange matters irrespective of the official device or procedure involved.

D. *Rates Differing from Parity by More than One Percent*

An effective buying or selling rate which, as the result of official action, e.g., the imposition of an exchange tax, differs from parity by more than 1 percent, constitutes a multiple currency practice.

MULTIPLE CURRENCY PRACTICES

I. The Executive Board has considered the staff paper on the "Review of Fund Policies on Multiple Currency Practices" (SM/57/2, Rev. 1, 5/3/57)* and is in agreement with the general approach of the paper.

II. Unification of the exchange rates in multiple rate systems is a basic objective of the Fund, and it is satisfying to record that several of the members which had followed such practices have been successful in achieving this objective, and that others have made considerable progress in this direction.

*Not included in this publication.

III. In reviewing the experience of the past ten years as summarized in the staff report, the Fund draws special attention to the fact that complex multiple rate systems damage the economies of countries maintaining them and harm other countries. These complex systems are difficult to administer, and involve frequent changes, discrimination, export subsidization, a considerable spread between rates, and undue differentiation between classes of imports.

IV. The Executive Board concludes that it is necessary and feasible to make more rapid progress in simplifying complex multiple rate systems, to remove those aspects of existing systems which adversely affect the interests of other members, and to avoid existing systems becoming more complex. Accordingly the following decision is taken:

1. Early and substantial steps should be taken to simplify complex multiple rate systems. The Fund will not approve such systems unless the countries maintaining them are making reasonable progress toward simplification and ultimate elimination of such systems, or are taking measures or adopting programs which seem likely to result in such progress.

2. As opportunity arises the Fund will continue to press for simplification in all cases where there is clear evidence that the multiple currency system in question is damaging to other members. It will in addition be reluctant to approve changes in multiple rate systems which make them more complex.

3. To assist members to simplify and eliminate complex rate systems the Fund wishes to intensify its collaboration with them. The Fund stands ready to meet members' requests for technical assistance in the preparation of economic programs and measures directed toward exchange simplification. These may in some cases include arrangements in other directions, especially in the fiscal and trade fields. If the Fund considers the proposed exchange simplification and related economic programs or measures to be adequate and appropriate, it will give sympathetic consideration, if requested, to the use of its resources.

Decision No. 649-(57/33)

June 26, 1957

POLICY ON MULTIPLE CURRENCY PRACTICES

The Executive Board has reviewed the Fund's policy with respect to multiple currency practices. The Fund shall be guided by the approach outlined in the conclusions set forth below.

1. Official action should not cause exchange rate spreads and cross rate quotations to differ unreasonably from those that arise from the normal commercial costs and risks of exchange transactions.

a. (i) Action by a member or its fiscal agencies that of itself gives rise to a spread of more than 2 percent between buying and selling rates for spot exchange transactions between the member's currency and any other member's currency would be considered a multiple currency practice and would require the prior approval of the Fund.

(ii) An exchange spread that arises without official action would not give rise to a multiple currency practice.

(iii) Deviations between the buying and selling rates for spot transactions and for other transactions would not be considered multiple currency practices if they represent the additional costs and exchange risks for these other transactions.

b. Action by a member or its fiscal agencies which results in midpoint spot exchange rates of other members' currencies against its own currency in a relationship which differs by more than 1 percent from the midpoint spot exchange rates for these currencies in their principal markets would give rise to a multiple currency practice. If the differentials of more than 1 percent in these cross rates persist for more than one week, the resulting multiple currency practice would become subject to the approval of the Fund under Article VIII, Section 3.

When difficulties are encountered in the interpretation and application of these criteria in specific cases, particularly concerning the nature of official actions, the staff will present the relevant information to the Executive Board for its determination.

2. The policy of the Fund on the exercise of its approval jurisdiction over exchange measures subject to Article VIII, as set forth in paragraph 2 of Executive Board Decision No. 1034-(60/27), adopted June 1, 1960, remains broadly appropriate. In accordance with this policy, the Fund will be prepared to grant approval of multiple currency practices introduced or maintained for balance of payments reasons provided the member represents and the Fund is satisfied that the measures are temporary and are being applied while the member is endeavoring to eliminate its balance of payments problems, and provided they do not give the member an unfair competitive advantage over other members or discriminate among members. The Fund will continue to be very reluctant to grant approval for the maintenance of broken cross exchange rates.

3. In accordance with the Fund's policy on complex multiple currency practices, as stated in Executive Board Decision No. 649-(57/33), adopted June 26, 1957, the Fund will not approve multiple currency practices under complex multiple rate systems unless the countries maintaining them are making reasonable progress toward simplification and ultimate elimination of such systems, or are taking measures or adopting programs which seem likely to result in such progress.

4. While urging members to apply alternative policies not connected with the exchange system, the Fund will be prepared to grant temporary approval of multiple currency practices introduced or maintained principally for nonbalance of payments reasons, provided that such practices do not materially impede the member's balance of payments adjustment, do not harm the interests of other members, and do not discriminate among members.

5. To assist the Executive Board in reaching a decision concerning approval or nonapproval of a multiple currency practice subject to approval under Article VIII, Section 3, the reasons underlying the practice and its effects will be analyzed in reports on Article IV consultations or in other staff papers dealing with exchange systems. In all cases, consistent with the cycle of consultations under Article IV, approval will be granted for periods of approximately one year, in order to provide for a continual review by the Executive

Board, except where the practice is maintained only for existing arrangements and for a specified period of time.

Decision No. 6790-(81/43)
March 20, 1981,
as amended by
Decision No. 11728-(98/56)
May 21, 1998

Voluntary Declaration on Trade and Other Current Account Measures

1. The ad hoc Committee of the Board of Governors on Reform of the International Monetary System and Related Issues, in the detailed statement issued at the end of its sixth and final meeting in Washington on June 12–13, 1974, stressed the importance of avoiding the escalation of restrictions on trade and payments for balance of payments purposes and invited members to subscribe on a voluntary basis to the Declaration concerning trade and other current account measures for balance of payments purposes annexed to its statement. The Executive Directors associate themselves with this invitation.

2. The letter from the Managing Director to members requesting them to inform the Fund whether they subscribe to the Declaration concerning trade and other current account measures for balance of payments purposes, as set forth [below] shall be sent without delay to all members.

Decision No. 4254-(74/75)
June 26, 1974

Letter to Members

Sir:

The ad hoc Committee of the Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund on Reform of the International Monetary System and Related Issues, in a statement issued at the end of its sixth

and final meeting in Washington on June 12–13, 1974, has stressed the importance of avoiding the escalation of restrictions on trade and payments for balance of payments purposes and has invited members of the Fund “to subscribe on a voluntary basis to the Declaration concerning trade and other current account measures for balance of payments purposes” annexed to the Committee’s statement.

The Executive Directors of the Fund associate themselves with the invitation of the ad hoc Committee and have asked that I send the text of the Declaration for consideration by the authorities of all members.

The text of the Declaration is enclosed with this letter.

I shall be grateful if members will consider subscribing to this Declaration and will inform me whether they do subscribe to it.

Very truly yours,

H. JOHANNES WITTEVEEN
Managing Director

Declaration

A. A member of the Fund that subscribes to this Declaration represents thereby that, in addition to observing its obligations with respect to payments restrictions under the Articles of Agreement of the Fund, it will not on its own discretionary authority introduce or intensify trade or other current account measures for balance of payments purposes that are subject to the jurisdiction of the GATT, or recommend them to its legislature, without a prior finding by the Fund that there is a balance of payments justification for trade or other current account measures.

B. A member that subscribes to this Declaration will notify the Fund as far in advance as possible of its intention to impose such measures. If circumstances preclude the Fund from making the finding referred to in A above promptly after such notification, the member may nevertheless impose such measures, but will withdraw the measures, within such a period as may be fixed by the Fund in consultation with the member concerned, if the Fund finds that there is no balance of payments justification for trade or other current account measures.

C. In arriving at the findings referred to above, the Executive Directors are requested to take into account the special circumstances of developing countries.

D. In connection with this Declaration arrangements will be made for continuing close coordination between the Fund and the GATT.

E. This Declaration shall become effective among subscribing members when members having 65 percent of the total voting power of members of the Fund have accepted it, and shall expire two years from the date on which it becomes effective unless it is renewed.