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Abstract

Special and Differential Treatment in the GATT: A Pyrrhic Victory for Developing Countries

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Preferential measures for developing countries implemented within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade failed to achieve their purported goal of facilitating economic development; this failure was due to their weak theoretical underpinnings and poor policy design. Not only were the demands developing countries made for discriminatory preferences largely ineffectual, their demands for preferential treatment, together with their forgoing full participation in the multilateral trading system, fundamentally reduced the obligation of developed countries to consider the interests of developing countries in future negotiation rounds. Thus the winning of preferences was rendered a pyrrhic victory for developing countries.

Keywords: Economic development, trade liberalization, GATT, special and differential treatment