1. While the United Nations regional commissions appear to be fully aware of the need for joint action to ensure that exporters in their member countries are fully informed of sales opportunities in overseas markets, and have accordingly developed or are developing means for disseminating this information (see COM.III/91), the Committee may wish to consider whether additional steps might be taken by the contracting parties in the same field so as to ensure that the less-developed countries derive the maximum benefit from the reduction of existing barriers to their trade.

2. One suggestion which has been made is that the industrial countries might themselves assist the less-developed countries in bringing to the notice of traders and consumers information on the types of products available from less-developed countries, for example, through the stimulus of discussions on radio or television with representatives of less-developed countries on the development plans of the latter countries. Further space might be made available on special terms to the less-developed countries in government and trade publications as well as in the daily Press, thus providing an opportunity for these countries to advertise their products.

3. A more specific proposal relates to the participation of less-developed countries in trade fairs in industrial countries. Among the possibilities here there are two which may be worth considering:

   (a) assistance to less-developed countries in the construction of national stands at trade fairs, and
   
   (b) where restrictions still exist upon imports, the provision of generous fair quotas to enable less-developed countries to secure the maximum benefit from participation in trade exhibitions.

4. As regards (a) above, it will be appreciated that participation in trade fairs is a costly business, the principal elements being ground rent, design and construction. Assistance in meeting the cost of these factors would undoubtedly be a major contribution in the assistance of less-developed countries in their trade promotion programmes. On the other side of the balance sheet, it may be noted that experience has shown that participation of less-developed countries in trade fairs has often added an element of attractiveness to a fair and has contributed to its success.
5. Few less-developed countries can afford the luxury of exhibiting products at an overseas trade fair unless they can be sure of being able to secure import facilities for their products on a scale large enough to compensate for the effort and expenditure involved. Furthermore, the maximum value from participation can be realized only if continued access to the market concerned is available. The Committee may wish to consider whether it would be prepared to recommend to contracting parties that they not only act in a liberal way in establishing fair quotas, but also undertake to ensure that continuing access is available on a liberal basis until the removal of the restrictions which make fair quotas necessary.

6. The above comments refer specifically to trade fairs and exhibitions and the facilities necessary to support such trade promotion activities. The Committee may in addition wish to give some consideration to other ways in which the less-developed countries can be assisted in promoting the sale of their products in existing markets or in the development of new market outlets.

7. Most of the industrialized countries have found it essential to establish a network of overseas government trade representatives as the basic framework for their trade promotion programmes. Many support the on-the-spot activities of these specialists with visits by highly organized selling missions, trade ships and in some cases the establishment of selling centres. As a general rule these government services are provided as a means of creating the optimum environment within which individual exporters can operate. The type of services commonly provided have been built up over the years on a trial and error basis. They differ from country to country and are tailored to meet the particular export needs of the individual country concerned.

8. It is appreciated that the type of export service developed to meet the requirements of a highly industrialized country exporting a wide range of sophisticated manufactured products may be of little use to countries who are basically exporters of agricultural products. Nevertheless, it would seem that, on the organizational side and in so far as supporting trade publicity is concerned, the industrialized countries should be in a position to make a significant contribution. For example, the experience gained in the organization of and the arrangement of publicity for government trade missions should be invaluable to countries which were embarking on such activities for the first time. Less-developed countries may well welcome an opportunity to have specialist trade promotion officers of their own administration participate in such organizational work in countries in which trade missions, for example, are a recognized and integral part of the overseas trade promotion programme.

9. The above notes are being submitted to members of the Committee at this stage in the hope that they will stimulate interest in and discussion of this aspect of the Committee’s work. They are in no way an attempt to foreshadow the reactions of the Committee as to what could usefully be done in this field.