OPENING STATEMENT MADE BY THE CHAIRMAN, H.E. MR. C. VALENZUELA
ON 7 JUNE 1966

This is the first time that I am presiding in the Committee on Trade and Development, and I should like to express my appreciation for the honour done to me and to assure you again that I shall do my utmost to measure up to the responsibility which you have conferred on me.

As we all know, our activities in GATT take place within the general framework of the General Agreement and, so far as this Committee is concerned, in accordance with its terms of reference.

Nevertheless, having regard to the nature of the matters that we are continually called upon to examine and its great importance for the developing countries, we also realize that our work forms part of a whole set of efforts and concerns of an international character. These same countries which we represent are pursuing one and the same objective in a number of world-wide or regional organizations or conferences - namely, trade expansion as a decisive factor for economic development. Within this singleness of purpose, and among other positive contributions by the international community, the task of GATT has been to bring out the importance of discussions between industrial countries and developing countries, and in this constructive and patient manner to seek constantly to widen the area of agreement.

Now, the prospects for widening this area of agreement depend on many factors. Some may be of a technical nature, and in this respect the work of the GATT secretariat deserves our constant appreciation. Others may be connected with the need for greater participation by our countries in certain specific tasks; as regards the difficulties and obstacles involved in overcoming urgent national problems, now and varied activities at regional and international level - all of great value - we can see that great efforts are being made and that in general our countries are tending to take an increasingly active part at international level. But together with these factors there is another which assuredly is of concern for all representatives here and which has a fundamental influence. I refer to the state of mind of the international community, to the feeling that, for reasons or motives which it is not our task to analyse, this key problem of "trade and development" might not seem to have the priority it deserves at the highest international level. To the extent that this state of mind changes, and that this problem of concern to us achieves pride of place in the world of political decisions, it will become possible to make spectacular headway in widening this area of agreement.
This year and next, final decisions will be taken in a wide field connected with trade and development. In other words, we are at the opening stage of a process of confrontation of expectations and possibilities. Bearing in mind this general picture, we wish the work programme of the Committee on Trade and Development to focus on a few concrete points with a view to co-operating in the search for a better understanding. This accounts for the provisional agenda proposed for the period June-September in document COM.TD/W/23, and also the list of other topics to be considered at a later meeting, as proposed in document COM.TD/W/24. You, gentlemen, will have to decide on what you consider appropriate.

As regards the first item on our agenda - the implementation of Part IV of the General Agreement, and ways of ensuring better and more efficient information, may I remind you of document L/2658 which states that forty-five ratifications are required in order to make Part IV fully effective. As at 3 June, there were forty-two ratifications. Only three were still needed to meet this essential requirement. With all respect, may I invite delegations which have not yet been able to announce the completion of their respective constitutional processes - and my own is one of these - to do their utmost to speed up these formalities. I suggest as a target that before our next meeting, Part IV of the General Agreement should be fully effective.

I do not wish to take up the Committee's time unduly by summing up each item on the provisional agenda. In the course of our discussion, the Chairman will intervene to give any explanations which may be considered desirable. I do wish to announce, however, that in connexion with item 4 - the Kennedy Round - I have asked the Deputy Director-General to make a statement to open the discussion.