1. At its thirty third session in June 1977, the Committee on Trade and Development reviewed the technical assistance activities of the secretariat in connexion with the participation of developing countries in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. For that purpose, the Committee had before it document COM.TD/W/252, which described the main areas of the secretariat’s work in the field of technical assistance. The following paragraphs summarize the activities of the secretariat in this respect since the last meeting of the Committee.

2. In the light of developments in the MTN in recent months, the secretariat’s technical assistance work has been increasingly geared to the operational aspects of the negotiations in the sense that requests for technical assistance from developing countries are more and more related to the submission of request lists, preparations for bilateral and plurilateral consultations, the need for facilities for developing countries wishing to discuss particular issues, etc.

3. Among current activities, the secretariat has continued to provide, at the request of delegations of developing countries, tabulations containing tariff and trade data which may facilitate the evaluation of the impact on the trade of individual developing countries of the application of various tariff-cutting formulae. These tabulations have been updated on the basis of 1971 trade data and the presentation improved to take into account suggestions by interested developing countries. It is expected that the data presented in the revised and updated tabulations might be useful to delegations from developing countries, inter alia, in identifying items at tariff-line level for appropriate treatment in the context of negotiations on tariffs.
4. In pursuance of the procedures agreed upon in the Group "Non-Tariff Measures" relating to the submission of request lists in the field of non-tariff measures, the secretariat is currently engaged in providing information and documentation at the request of developing countries concerning non-tariff measures of particular interest to them. The information being provided is expected to help developing countries in the preparation of their request lists.

5. The secretariat is also providing information and documentation, at the request of developing countries, concerning tariff and non-tariff measures affecting trade in agricultural products of particular interest to them, so as to enable individual developing countries to prepare and submit request lists in accordance with the procedures decided upon by Group "Agriculture".

6. As regards tropical products, the secretariat has continued to assist developing countries so requesting with updated information on tropical products in the light of developments over the last twelve months, including the implementation of concessions and contributions negotiated in the framework of the Group "Tropical Products". Certain basic information has also been compiled at the request of some developing countries with a view to permitting them to consider the possibilities of seeking plurilateral consultations on particular products and with respect to their resubmission under the procedures of the Groups "Agriculture" and "Non-Tariff Measures" of requests still pending or not adequately dealt with in the framework of the Group "Tropical Products".

7. Upon request, the services of an officer of the GATT secretariat were made available for an MTN seminar held in Beirut under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, arranged under the UNDP/UNCTAD technical assistance project. An officer of the secretariat is also taking part in an MTN seminar being held in Bangkok in November under the auspices of the ESCAP/Commonwealth secretariats.

8. The secretariat has continued to respond to various ad hoc requests of developing countries relating to studies, information or data compilations on various areas of the negotiations of relevance to the particular situation of interested developing countries.