The Thirty-Sixth Session of the GATT Contracting Parties (member States) will begin in Geneva on Monday, 24 November. The Chairman of the Contracting Parties is Ambassador Erik Nettel (Austria).

At this session, expected to last about three days, GATT's members will examine recent world trade developments; take stock of their actions to respond collectively, through GATT as a treaty and negotiating forum, to these events; and assess progress made in putting into effect GATT's work programme adopted at the Thirty-Fifth Session in November 1979.

The Contracting Parties will review the annual report of the GATT Council of Representatives, which acts on behalf of the Contracting Parties during the intervals between their sessions. The report records action on about sixty specific matters (including the work of 13 panels entrusted with settling international trade disputes) which have come before the Council at its meetings since last November.

The member States will have before them reports from each of the Committees or Councils set up to oversee the implementation of the various Tokyo Round agreements which came into force either late last year or on 1 January this year.

The member States will also receive reports from GATT's Committee on Trade and Development, and from the Consultative Group of Eighteen, concerning current trade issues, including protectionism and the need to define GATT's rôle in the relationship between trade policy and structural adjustment.

GATT's 85 member States account for about 85 per cent of world trade. A further 32 countries apply GATT rules in their trade.