The Consultative Group of Eighteen held its fourteenth meeting on 25-27 March 1981 in Geneva. The Chairman was Mr. Arthur Dunkel, Director-General of GATT.

The Group examined the current economic situation, and its implications for trade policies. The Group noted that the international trade situation remained difficult and agreed that it was essential that the multilateral trading rules established under the GATT continue to be effectively implemented. In this context the Group stressed the need for renewed political commitment to continue to strengthen the multilateral trading system. There was a widespread view that ways and means should be examined to maintain the momentum in favour of an open trading system.

The members of the Group reaffirmed their commitment to full implementation of the results of the Tokyo Round of multilateral trade negotiations. They noted with satisfaction that with the entry into force from the beginning of this year of the agreements on Government Procurement and Customs Valuation all the Tokyo Round agreements were now in operation. They emphasized the importance of the broadest possible participation of countries in these agreements. Many members called for an early solution on safeguards.

Particular stress was laid on the current trade problems of developing countries, and on the need to pursue work on these matters in the GATT.

For the first time, the Group devoted a day of its meeting to discussion of the international trading system as it relates to agricultural trade. In doing so, it responded to a request, made by the GATT Contracting Parties in November 1980, that it provide additional time for the review of matters affecting agricultural trade.
The Group exchanged views on a recent report by a GATT working party on the rôle of GATT in the area of structural adjustment and trade policy and expressed satisfaction that a programme of work had been established in this area. The Group also discussed a number of specific matters raised at previous meetings by individual members.

The fifteenth meeting will be held on 25 and 26 June 1981.

The Consultative Group of Eighteen consists of high-level representatives nominated by governments, with trade policy responsibilities in their countries. Its purpose is to provide GATT, on a continuing basis, with a small but representative group in which existing and emerging trade policy issues can be discussed.