The Thirty-Seventh Session of the GATT Contracting Parties (member States) will begin in Geneva on Monday, 23 November. The Chairman of the Contracting Parties is Ambassador Gabriel O. Martinez (Argentina).

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 contractual agreement and negotiating forum, to these events; and assess progress made in putting into effect GATT's work programme. A decision is expected to be taken on a proposal that the 38th Session of the Contracting Parties, in November 1982, be held at ministerial level.

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 fifty specific matters, including a number of trade disputes between various GATT member States, which have come before the Council at its meetings over the past year.

The Contracting Parties will receive reports from GATT's Committee on Trade and Development, and from the Consultative Group of Eighteen, which has made the recommendation for a ministerial-level session.

The member States will also have before them reports from each of the Committees or Councils set up to oversee implementation of the various Tokyo Round agreements, all of which are now in force.

GATT's 86 member States account for about 85 per cent of world trade. A further 32 countries apply GATT rules in their trade.