THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES

MINISTERIAL MEETING

The Thirty-Eighth Session of GATT's 88 Contracting Parties (member states) will be held at the Geneva International Conference Centre from 22-27 November 1982.

From 0900 on Wednesday, 24 November until mid-day on Saturday, 27 November, the meeting will be held at Ministerial level. The Chairman of the Ministerial Session will be The Hon. Allan MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Secretary of State for External Affairs. Meetings on 22 and 23 November will be at official level, and will be chaired by Ambassador Donald S. McPhail (Canada), the Chairman of the Contracting Parties.

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The decision to hold part of the 1982 Session of the Contracting Parties at Ministerial level was taken by GATT's member states at their Session in November 1981.

The purpose of the Ministerial meeting, according to the unanimous decision taken in Geneva on 25 November 1981, will be "to examine the functioning of the multilateral trading system, and to reinforce the common efforts of the contracting parties to support and improve the system for the benefit of all nations". The GATT member states agreed that Ministers would address themselves to "the implementation of the results of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations, problems affecting the trading system, the position of developing countries in world trade and future prospects for the development of trade. Finally, in the context of their consideration of the work programme of the GATT for the 1980's, Ministers would also determine future priorities for co-operation among contracting parties".

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1Details of press arrangements for the Ministerial Session are contained in the information note GATT/1325 circulated last week.

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During the Session at official level on 22 and 23 November, GATT's member states 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 forty specific matters, including a number of trade disputes between various GATT member states, which have been brought 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. 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.