Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen,

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has followed with the greatest attention the work of your Conference. He has asked me to assure you of the interest he has taken in the discussions which have retained you in Geneva for long months and of which the results promise to be of considerable importance.

Those who for any reason busy themselves with international economic problems cannot remain indifferent to the question of international trade which, after all, is what you are here to discuss. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, an institution whose essential functions include the promotion of higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development must, if anyone must, pay particular attention to all that takes place in the field of international trade.

I have no need to tell you to what extent the problems of international trade are closely and indissolubly linked with the intricate skein of problems for which Governments, including your own, have made the United Nations specially responsible. This question of international trade comes up for discussion in all our institutions from the General Assembly to the subsidiary organs of our regional economic commissions. Both the Economic and Social Council and our regional economic commissions are deeply absorbed in the consideration of various aspects of international trade and related problems and in a search for means of cooperation between Member States working to promote the development of international trade, and, hence, the improvement of living standards throughout the nations of the world.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to take account of all steps to realize the objective which in imperative terms is imposed on us all by Articles 55 and 62 of the United Nations Charter to do all in our power to coordinate these efforts so that they do not clash, overlap or lead to divergency of policies. In addition to a coordinated effort, the need is felt for positive cooperation which, by combining real interests with good intentions, would endeavour to use to the best advantage the resources at the disposal of the organizations mainly concerned.

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Therein lies the only preoccupation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and that is the guiding principle which dominates his attitude towards the work you are doing here. Contemplating the results of your work, we have good reason to hope that this desire for cooperation is shared by the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement, for you have written into your draft constituent agreement for the Organization which you intend to set up, a provision to the effect that, in its relations with other international bodies, the future Organization shall aim at effective cooperation and the avoidance of duplication of activities.

In connection with a special matter which has taken up much of your time during the current Session, I should like to insist somewhat on the necessity for such cooperation. You have before you the first draft of an agreement on primary commodities, prepared by a group of experts. None better than you are aware that this is a question which, not to mention several other members of the United Nations family, is of special interest to the Economic and Social Council and some of its subsidiary bodies, including the Commission on International Commodity Trade which recently began to function. The Secretary-General of the United Nations will be very happy to take the opportunity offered him to examine the draft agreement on commodity arrangements and to make more detailed observations and comments on the provisions of that agreement. He hopes also to be able to send his representative to the next session of your Working Party which deals with commodity problems. But even as it is, he feels it his duty to stress that the commodity problem is one for which steps should be taken to compare common aims and programmes and to seek effective means of cooperation.

We are, of course, only on the threshold of our common efforts, for it is not enough to write the idea into a document for it to materialize. As Aristide Briand often said of peace, cooperation, too, is a continuous creation. We shall still have to find means to ensure in our daily work methods of consultation which will enable us to achieve the sort of effective cooperation we all desire. For the moment, we are glad to note that it is at least a principle proclaimed by the Contracting Parties, and on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, I desire here and now to assure you of our unreserved adherence to that principle.