On 11 June 1957 a series of consultations on import restrictions will open at Geneva.

The background of this programme lies in the decision of the Contracting Parties to GATT, which was taken at the Eleventh Session in November 1956, to invite individual contracting parties which are still restricting imports for balance-of-payments reasons to enter into consultations, under the terms of Article XII:4(b) of the GATT, before the end of the Twelfth Session, i.e. before the end of 1957.

The general purpose of these consultations is to consider whether these restrictions on imports are being applied in ways which are least harmful to the flow of international trade or whether they could produce less injurious effects if applied in alternative ways. These consultations are expected to throw new light on the prospects for further progress towards the relaxation and eventual elimination of such restrictions.

The Contracting Parties also appointed a Consultations Committee to conduct the consultations. The following countries are members of this Committee: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Pakistan, United Kingdom and the United States. The Chairman of the Committee is Mr. Lionello Cozzi, Deputy Permanent Delegate for Italy in Geneva. This Committee will hold its first meeting on 11 June.

During the first stage of the programme, which is expected to last three to four weeks, the following countries will enter into consultations: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Italy, Greece, Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and Austria.
In the second stage, which will begin on 30 September, Turkey, Finland, United Kingdom and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland will enter into consultations.

In the third stage it is expected that a further six contracting parties, namely Australia, Ceylon, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan and the Union of South Africa, will enter into consultations during the period of the Twelfth Session of the Contracting Parties which opens at Geneva on 17 October 1957.

In the final stage, the Contracting Parties will consider the reports of the Consultations Committee referring to each consultation that has been held.

The International Monetary Fund will participate in this GATT programme of consultations.