It is for the second time that I have the privilege of addressing the meeting of the CONTRACTING PARTIES and I should like, first of all, to express my appreciation for being given this opportunity of making the following statement before this distinguished gathering.

A year ago I had the honour of outlining Poland's foreign trade position, its organization and structure to the Heads of delegations to the meeting of the Intersessional Committee and of informing them of the intention of my Government to accede to the General Agreement. This time it is my privilege of making an official statement in this respect.

Poland has participated in the work of the CONTRACTING PARTIES as an observer since the twelfth session. We have, therefore, had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the objectives of the General Agreement and their implementation which, by eliminating trade barriers and other obstacles, aims at promoting international trade.

Last year Poland expressed the desire of joining the General Agreement. As the next step, the CONTRACTING PARTIES submitted a number of questions to the Polish Government which, in turn, supplied information requested. We are most grateful for the assistance rendered by the secretariat which has helped my Government to prepare its replies. We feel that this stage of the work has now been completed.

After a careful study of the principles of the General Agreement and after having taken cognizance of its practical implementation by the CONTRACTING PARTIES, the Polish Government decided to apply officially for admission to the General Agreement. To this effect, it has submitted to the Executive Secretary a formal application.

MORE
The aims of the General Agreement, as stated in its Preamble, express the guiding principles of the GATT. The same principles inspire Poland in its trade relations with foreign countries. We are endeavouring and shall continue to endeavour to achieve trade relations advantageous to all concerned. We are also always ready to contribute to the promotion of international trade and to the increased benefits resulting therefrom, by participating in agreement aiming at the elimination of obstacles to international trade. Our interest in the work of the Contracting Parties arises out of these facts. We are of the opinion that our collaboration within the framework of the General Agreement will permit an accelerated expansion of the commercial exchanges between Poland and Member States of the GATT which — and I should like to emphasize this — are now 50 per cent higher than in 1950.

The existence of possibilities of further increasing Poland's foreign trade is proved by the results of last year's trade. Its volume increased by 10 per cent as compared with 1957, though it is well-known that last year was less favourable to international trade than previous years. Poland's foreign trade turnover in 1958 reached almost 72,500 million and, as I already pointed out, was 10 per cent higher than in the previous year. Trade turnover with Member States of the GATT exceeded 71,050 million in 1958 and increased, as compared with 1957, by almost 17 per cent. As a result, the share of trade turnover with Member States of the GATT in the total foreign trade of Poland rose from 43.5 per cent in 1957 to 46.1 per cent in 1958. All these figures are based on 1957 prices.

The continuous development of our economy creates systematically increasing outlets for many products exported by the contracting parties as raw materials, manufactured products and many food items, without mentioning capital goods. On the other hand we are steadily developing the production of goods which can find permanent markets abroad. In this respect I should like to point out, that, in my opinion, views held in certain circles according to which planned economy means autarchic economy are entirely misleading.

Our economic planning is based, to a very great extent, on a programme of developing trade relations with foreign countries. We are looking for new markets which would at the same time create additional and increasing opportunities of buying foreign merchandise. The great importance of foreign trade for our economy justifies Poland's particular interest in broadening the scope of international trade, which is also the principal aim of the General Agreement.

The principles on which Poland's economy and foreign trade are based differ from the principles binding the majority of the contracting parties. But we do not believe that these differences would stand in the way of our successful collaboration within the framework of this Organization. On the contrary I can say here that the Polish Government is ready to
accept the obligations arising out of its membership of the General agreement, provided that Poland is granted corresponding rights. However, if it were to prove impossible for Poland to be admitted at present as full member to the General Agreement, my Government would be prepared to accept provisionally some other suitable form of its closer co-operation with the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

We fully realize that our collaboration with the CONTRACTING PARTIES, whatever form it may take, must be based on the principle of equitable balance of rights and obligations and mutual benefits which is inherent in the general philosophy of the GATT. I am convinced that there exists every opportunity of our collaborating with the CONTRACTING PARTIES if these principles are observed. I already took the liberty of submitting certain proposals and suggestions in this connexion to the Heads of delegations last year. We are, in fact, prepared now to consider also other proposals aiming at this objective.

I should like to stress the fact that Poland is striving to increase its imports and gradually to make its import policies more elastic to the extent permitted by its economic development and by the improvement of its balance of payments. I am convinced that this trade policy of my Government will increase the possibility of enlarging mutually beneficial trade relations.

To end, I should like once more to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having given me the floor today, and to thank the Executive Secretary for the efficient manner in which he has helped us to state our case before you.

END