I should like, first, to thank you, on behalf of the African countries which have asked me to represent them at this meeting, as well as in the name of the Minister of Commerce of Senegal, who authorized me to attend this ministerial meeting of GATT, for having invited us to this meeting.

May I congratulate the sponsors of this meeting on the excellent manner in which it is being conducted and the high level of discussion achieved.

Among the inspiring remarks which we have heard, one cannot fail to be impressed by the message of His Majesty the King of the Belgians, who said:

"Vast regions of the world are undergoing transformation. They have embarked on a stubborn and sometimes desperate struggle against hunger, disease and ignorance. For their development and for the consolidation of their structures, they need the co-operation of nations which, like ours, have had the privilege of reaching an advanced stage of technical organization and a high standard of living long before they did. This co-operation stems from an urgent need for solidarity and international justice. At the same time, such co-operation is a pledge of peace for the world, since world peace is threatened wherever there is a glaring imbalance in the distribution of wealth. It is our duty to provide those countries with the material and technical assistance which they need."

We cannot fail to be moved by the sincerity of the generous expressions of human brotherhood which we have heard during this discussion.

My remarks will be brief. Since the beginning of this session everything has been said, and well said, on the need for harmonizing international trade, and many speakers also have made reservations with regard to the European Economic Community, more especially, the preferences which it grants or promises to products from the associated States.

Before going any farther, I should like to reassure you as to the feelings of sympathy and brotherliness of the African countries which I represent here. We are resolved to contribute to any solution of the problems of under-development, for the good of mankind and for peace among men, and we wish to reaffirm, as President Senghor has said, that peace will follow on a phase of economic decolonization.
Various arguments have been advanced; legal, economic and human. Without wishing to go more deeply into the legal points raised and despite the excellent documentation at our disposal, has it not been fully demonstrated that the incidence of the common external tariff of the EEC is virtually equivalent to that of the former national tariffs? What greater equivalence can they ask?

Numerous references have been made to the economic damage caused by the common external tariff of the EEC, more especially by reciprocal preferences.

In this connexion the best proof apparently is to be found in statistics. What do they show?

As regards coffee, imports into the EEC rose by 25 per cent, i.e. by 90,000 tons, between 1958 and 1960, but this increase was almost entirely to the advantage of the Latin American countries, which exported to the Community 84,000 tons more than before.

As to cocoa, EEC imports from the non-associated countries rose proportionately more than did total imports by the Community (17 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively).

Where then is the damage which the association is alleged to have caused? I asked this question at the eighteenth session last May. I received no reply in arithmetical terms, which are the only decisive ones in trade matters. And in the present discussion I have not heard any figures of damage stated.

I have not said this for the purpose of arguing that the under-developed countries have suffered no damage, still less for the purpose of minimizing any such damage. On the contrary, I have eloquent details on this point.

Mr. d'Arboussier, Minister of Justice of Senegal, has drawn the following comparisons.

The 2,000 million people of the "third" countries have but 10 per cent of world resources and energy, while the 800 million inhabitants of the developed countries have 90 per cent of the resources and energy of the world. These latter figures cover Eastern and Western countries without distinction.

Does this not throw a special light on the contents of the petition submitted by the developing countries to this meeting on 27 November (document MIN/2), namely that, as compared with 1953, the price index of foodstuffs of tropical origin has fallen to 85, whereas the industrial goods price index has risen to 109. And the same document concludes that it is, consequently, not surprising to find that the trade imbalance of the less-developed countries has amounted to 11,000 million dollars in the last four years.
This tragic, one might even say explosive, situation has gripped the attention of the representatives meeting here.

Several solutions are proposed. To mention only some of them - France, always in the forefront of human progress, has been the first to propose a world market organization for individual products, such as cereals, coffee etc.

Belgium has supported that proposal, adding a call for action by the adoption of immediate and dynamic solutions.

Loyal to their generous reputation, the United States of America propose a system on the world scale.

The associated States agree that the de facto situation of economic and social imbalance of the proletarian nations should be remedied.

The method generally proposed calls for the total liberalization of international trade. That would be the ideal solution, and, of course, it is even a thrilling idea, but, as that great Frenchman, Jaurès wisely said, ideals are attained by starting from hard facts. And what is the factual situation today?

Many countries have recently acceded to political independence. They are seeking to balance their domestic economy, which depends on international economy, but rightly or wrongly, a barrier has risen between some of these countries and international competition. Should we remove that barrier in order to launch out on a wider field of action? Perhaps we should, but we must be cautious. All the more so, since our partners in the Common Market are suggesting replacing the old bonds of domination and exploitation by new links of co-operation and association for our "economic and social development". Part 4 of the Rome Treaty is categorical. True, it is in the process of revision but we have no reason to be pessimistic. What is more, these promises have already begun to be translated into practical measures - for instance, the European Development Fund, and the reciprocal preferences which are under discussion here.

I gladly repeat the question which I asked here two weeks ago: is anyone saying more or doing more to solve the problems of under-development? What better proof could there be that the EEC is on the right path than the many and striking applications for accession made to it? It is realistic to build up the world trade organization which we all desire on the basis of regional organizations, and we should start on the basis of the following bodies, or a re-grouping of them:

the Commonwealth,
the Franc Area,
the EFTA,
the Central American Free Trade Association,
the Colombo Group,
the African-Malagasy Economic Co-operation Organization,
the Casablanca Group,
the Monrovia Group and EEC.

At this meeting yesterday the representative of a country which has
given countless lessons of wisdom to the world, said "Do everything to
develop international trade, but do not break my links with the EEC".

The African States associated with the EEC would remind this meeting
that a free trade system built up without adequate preparation may engender
harmful freedom such as the freedom to die of hunger, or the freedom of the
strong to devour the weak. The African countries are familiar with the
greed of international trusts and the harmful influence which they exert on
tropical products by creating surpluses or shortages according to their own
exclusive interests.

The EEC provides an example of human brotherhood based on multilateral
and multi-national co-operation, freely accepted by the partners. Is anyone
doing more?

Rather than oppose it, my plea is that we should follow the example of the
EEC in its efforts to overcome ignorance, poverty and hunger in the "third
countries" by maintaining preferences until a better solution is found.