I am deeply conscious of the honour which the countries who submitted the Programme of Action for consideration by the ministers have done me by asking me to make a brief concluding statement on their behalf. We hope this statement will be of some help to the ministers in coming to final conclusions on matters which have been under careful and searching examination for the last four days. We must thank the ministers for the consideration and attention which they have given to the proposed Programme of Action. We should also like to express our sincere appreciation to those countries who have supported the proposed programme even though they were not formally associated with it.

We wish to mention in particular that the Programme of Action is complementary to the proposal for a declaration on promotion of the trade of less-developed countries submitted by my distinguished colleague, Mr. George Ball. We find that the United States proposal sets out the fundamental issues in an objective and lucid manner and contains major guiding principles based on certain findings and recommendations of the three Committees. We suggest that these two proposals should be treated as complementary to each other so that the decisions arrived at in this meeting can be incorporated in a document reflecting the analysis and the principles contained in the United States proposal and the specific procedures and measures of implementation contained in the Programme of Action. We have noted with satisfaction the support which the Nigerian proposal for duty-free entry in respect of tropical products has received from some of the ministers and we hope that it will be possible to work out a satisfactory solution.

Regarding tariff reductions, we would like the ministers to give particular thought to the question of affording adequate relaxation in the application of the principle of reciprocity of concessions and substantial suppliers' interest. We would be willing to participate in any programme of tariff negotiations which takes into account our development and fiscal needs.

We have noted the great concern expressed by ministers about the extensive use of restrictive non-tariff measures in the agricultural field. It is necessary that practical measures should be adopted to facilitate expansion of trade in agricultural commodities in accordance with the General Agreement. It would be useful if initial action is taken by the Contracting Parties at the present session and the progress of work is supervised and co-ordinated by the Council between meetings of the Contracting Parties.
The need for less-developed countries to expand and diversify their exports has been unanimously endorsed by the ministers and we are deeply grateful to them for the bold and imaginative treatment which they have accorded to this vital problem. The real solution lies in recognizing that improved and expanding access to markets has to be provided to less-developed countries to enable them to carry out their development programmes and raise the standards of living in their countries. We are not unmindful of the difficulties which stand in the way of advanced countries, in providing complete and unrestricted access to their markets, but we feel that advanced countries are in a position to bring about a rapid rationalization and structural adjustment in their economies. Once this process of adjustment gets under way, we should be able to achieve the maximum use of world resources in the most efficient and economic manner. Until that stage is reached, it would be desirable to lay down specific measures for progressive reduction and elimination of barriers to the exports of less-developed countries in various fields, including tropical products, raw materials, semi-processed and processed goods. Once such a plan has been adopted, member countries should periodically report their performance for review by the Contracting Parties.

In conclusion, we should like to reaffirm our faith in the General Agreement which we regard as the most appropriate forum for discussion of trade problems among all countries of the world. We would like to see this organization grow from strength to strength so that all member countries derive benefits from the working of the General Agreement in a full and equitable manner.