In the fourteen years of its life this organization has been extremely fortunate in having as its Executive Secretary a very remarkable man who has served us both as mentor and conscience, and I should like on behalf of the United States delegation, and I am sure that in this respect I can speak for all of us assembled here, to express our thanks to Mr. Eric Wyndham White for his very large part in the organization of this meeting as well as for his valiant and patient toils over the years on behalf of the principles of liberal trade. I may say that he is the youngest elder statesman on record.

I should like also to say that we of the United States delegation feel a sense of urgency about getting on to the conclusion of the Dillon round of negotiations, and it is our hope that during the course of this meeting in the conversations that we may have with ministers assembled here we shall on our part be able to reach substantial conclusions on the various items which are left unsettled. I would hope that this could be the case for all of the other members of the GATT so that this round can be brought to a conclusion.

In the fourteen years that the GATT has been in existence the world has seen many changes, and the trading patterns of the world have shifted and changed and altered their form very substantially. In the early days of the GATT we were still experiencing the slow and painful recovery from a shattering war. Since that time we have had a new phenomenon to deal with, a very hopeful one, the emergence on the world scene of a great number of new nations achieving sovereignty and independence for the first time and becoming most useful members of the society of nations. While this has added a complication, it also affords an additional promise to our work here in trying together to bring about the expansion and improvement of world trade. The other principal circumstance which has arisen and which becomes a new element in the equation of trade liberalization is, of course, the development of the European Economic Community itself, and now the possibility of a substantial further expansion of the Community by the adhesion of the United Kingdom and possibly of other governments. This is a development which is of direct interest not merely to those nations which are participating in this great experience, but also to all of the trading nations of the world. The size, the importance, the very special position which the Community must necessarily play in world commerce and in the negotiating process which could lead to trade expansion is obviously something of the very highest significance.

I think, therefore, that this is a very good time for us assembled here today to begin to think seriously about trying to adapt some of our techniques and some of our ideas with regard to trade liberalization to the new realities of what is essentially a new trading world, having a different size and shape and form from any trading world that we have known before. We are very fortunate,
I think, that the GATT is such a flexible instrument. We are very fortunate that it has been so wisely led as to preserve that essential element of flexibility. I think that through the GATT we should be able, by the pooling of the experience of all of us, to develop some new and extremely useful ideas. For our own part, speaking as the delegate from the United States, I may say that we are engaged in a very careful re-examination of our policies. We are looking quite seriously at the possibilities of shaping new legislation which will provide new tools for the United States Executive to enable us to play our part in the development of new policies through the GATT and the adoption of those policies through the multilateral mechanism which the GATT provides. I would hope that within a very short time we can disclose in some detail the exact form of the proposals which the President will be making to the United States Congress. But I can say that they will be adapted to the new realities of the trading world as we see them.

This is a time I think for the development of new techniques. But it is certainly no time for the abandonment of old and steadfast principles. I may say that the eternal verities of trade liberalization are three so far as we are concerned: the negotiation of trade liberalization through a multilateral mechanism, the preservation and the application assiduously and consistently of the principle of non-discrimination, that is, the most-favoured-nation principle, and finally, the primacy of the GATT in the reaching of arrangements for the expansion of trade through the negotiating process. These principles we urge upon this meeting here today as having a very special character and of being of very special value.

I think that we should not lose the momentum that we have created over the years. I think that with the prospective conclusion of the present round of negotiations we should be thinking very seriously of plans for undertaking a further negotiating round. In that connexion I think we may need techniques which are better adapted to the conditions which we face in the world today. There are obviously a whole new set of ideas which have been introduced within the past few years, to a considerable extent through the developments of the techniques of the Rome Treaty. These include the possibility of linear cuts, of weighted averages, and other techniques which might be applied to assist a successful negotiation. I do not think we should pre judge at this point what techniques should be the most useful to us all. But I should think that it would be useful if the Contracting Parties in the course of this meeting would direct the undertaking of a study of plans for a new round of tariff negotiations and the development of techniques appropriate for today’s world which may be employed in the course of those negotiations.