Item I: Measures for the Expansion of Trade of Developing Countries as a Means of furthering their Economic Development

No task this meeting faces is more important than that of finding ways to improve the export opportunities of less-developed countries. If we do not succeed in this task, much of the time, effort and money that the countries represented here have put into economic and technical aid will have been wasted and we will have failed in our common purpose of enabling less-developed countries to move forward with their economic development.

The United States hopes to make toward this objective at least as great a contribution as that of any other industrialized country.

Regarding the recommendations under the heading of duty-free entry for tropical products - which is point I.B. of our agenda - my Government joins in urging that the Ministers accept the recommendations of the majority of the countries participating in the work of the Special Group on Trade in Tropical Products. We understand that it was not possible for all countries to join in those recommendations at the time they were originally formulated, but we hope that it may be possible to reach unanimous approval of them at the meeting - or to lay the groundwork for such unanimity at an early date.

Concerning the seven points to which paragraph I.A.3 of the agenda directs our attention, the United States has taken a positive position on all of them. In certain cases, along with other industrialized countries, we have accepted the points recommended by the less-developed countries with certain minor qualifications. For example, in the case of the recommendation for the elimination of tariffs on the tropical products which have been studied in Committee III, the
elimination or substantial reduction of those few tariffs we maintain on those products can take place only in connexion with the forthcoming round of tariff negotiations. I can at a later point in this discussion, if this proves necessary, comment in more detail on each of these points.

I have already indicated that we endorse the recommendations of the Special Group on Trade in Tropical Products. This includes the recommendations concerning individual commodities such as cocoa, coffee, etc. Here again I will be glad at a later date, if this proves necessary, to indicate our position more specifically.

As concerns point I.C. of the agenda - covering other measures to facilitate the efforts of less-developed countries to diversify their economies, strengthen their export capacity, and increase their earnings from overseas sales - the United States supports the proposal that industrialized countries, in framing their policies affecting the pattern of production, take into account the need for providing larger outlets for the exports of the less-developed countries.

In paragraph 9.B of page 10 of the agenda, there is the suggestion that the Executive Secretary be instructed to make arrangements for a study of the possibility of establishing preferences in favour of the products of developing countries. While I would not conceal the fact that the two proposals that have been made in this respect would raise serious questions in our minds, we are happy to agree that the matter be studied further and will be glad to co-operate in that study.

Finally, we fully endorse the proposal in paragraph 11 on page 11 of the agenda that the Ministers should recognize the need for an adequate legal and institutional framework to enable the Contracting Parties to discharge their responsibilities toward less-developed countries and agree that a working party should be appointed to study this question urgently and report to the twenty-first session of the Contracting Parties this Fall.