STATEMENT MADE BY H.E. MR. JULIO A. LACARTE, AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT, URUGUAY, ON 18 MAY 1963

Item II: Arrangements for the Reduction or Elimination of Tariffs and other Barriers to Trade, and Related Matters

Item III: Measures for Access to Markets for Agricultural and other Primary Products

The Government of Uruguay starts from the premise that, as set forth in our agenda, the successful conclusion of the general trade negotiations which we are trying to arrange at this Meeting of Ministers will depend on a satisfactory solution of problems in all sectors, and that the balance of advantages will be evaluated according to the final result of the negotiations as a whole.

So far as Uruguay is concerned, this requirement is particularly pertinent in the sector of agriculture.

While we do not consider the procedures recommended in our agenda to be fully satisfactory, and hope that this meeting will improve them appreciably, we can nevertheless take those procedures as a starting point for studying this matter; but we attach greater importance to the manner in which they are
carried out and also to the spirit in which this task is taken up. For example, we are prepared to consider the possible desirability of drawing up an agreement on meat, in the hope of thus achieving a satisfactory solution to the problems created for the traditional exporting countries by restrictive systems - some of which are in flagrant breach of the General Agreement - and export subsidies; and in this matter we shall act in conformity with the rights and obligations incumbent on us as signatories of the General Agreement. We shall nevertheless have to be shown that a commodity agreement is really the best and only way of settling the problem of the world market for meat.

In our judgement, the difficulties which we are experiencing are basically due to the protectionist systems, with the quantitative and other restrictions which they include. Accordingly we believe that disturbances of the meat market are largely due to artificial factors; for there is no excess of supply over demand - quite the contrary - and those disturbances will disappear as and when the GATT rules are respected. This is our position of principle - respect for the provisions of the General Agreement, for we believe that it clearly shows us the path to be followed. I repeat: in our desire for conciliation we are prepared to consider other formulae, but not to abandon our basic conception or to lose sight at any time of the well-defined responsibilities incumbent on all of us in our capacity as contracting parties.

We support the proposal drafted in the Working Group to take the necessary steps to maintain the status quo in regard to meat and other products. This does not differ from the proposal in point (i) of the Action Programme, which has met with a good deal of support at this meeting. We urge its adoption without thereby implying that it is to replace a sensible solution of the problems for which it is a mere emergency palliative.

In our view this Meeting ought to express a clear-cut opinion, without losing sight of the aims of the General Agreement, on the establishment of efficient negotiating procedures dealing with agricultural products for which the agreements system is not suitable and which, for the reasons I have just given, could properly include meat.

On this subject we have listened with interest to the Australian Minister, who has informed us that he is to submit a draft concerning the appointment of a group to negotiate on primary products from the temperate zone. We shall be glad to discuss this proposal.

We fully support the existing proposals for negotiation, starting next month, on primary products from the temperate zone.

Agriculture is inseparably linked to negotiations on tariffs. We hold that the talks should cover non-industrial products - agricultural and primary - in regard both to customs duties and to other restrictions. If they are improperly excluded from the negotiations, the ends of these will be defeated
and we shall not be further interested in them, for they will not cover products important to the less-developed countries.

For that reason we consider it essential to comply fully with the rule that the scope of the negotiations shall admit only the strict minimum of exceptions.

We fully concur with the opinion expressed in the Working Group by the representatives of the countries exporting agricultural produce that, since they have not derived proper benefit from their rights as Members of the Agreement, this serious problem will have to be solved if they are to take part in the tariff negotiations. After all, we cannot take part in negotiations where we are at a disadvantage from the start.

As speakers have already shown, the Agreement has long been unsatisfactory to countries exporting agricultural produce. My Government is watching this Meeting of Ministers closely and in order to protect the foundations and foster the process of economic development, it will certainly determine its future policy according to the tangible results we can offer it and to their effect on the pressure of the increasingly urgent needs of our national economy.