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

All those who have spoken so far in this debate have recognized the importance and the urgency of a decision on the problem now before us. Thereby giving a very eloquent expression of the common feeling of responsibility of the Contracting Parties not to let this chance go by to establish a firm and better basis for the movement towards free trade in the world.

It is also the view of my Government that we should try here to agree on the broad outlines of a plan for a linear reduction of tariffs which takes full advantage of the possibilities offered in this respect by the various proposals and suggestions made.

In accordance with the views expressed by Mr. Errcll and several other speakers it is also my opinion that first priority should be given to the efforts to secure the deepest possible cut on the widest possible field. At
the 1961 Conference I myself suggested a 50 per cent linear cut over five years. I still hold this view and I am therefore glad to support the United States proposal in this respect.

At the same time it is with great interest that I have studied the recent decision in Brussels. The problem of disparities in tariff levels and in duties on individual items has always been a concern to Sweden. A linear reduction plan may therefore perhaps be amended by provisions in some way taking care of the special position of low duties. If these views are met I could, in principle, go along with the equal linear cut plan. There may, of course, be other suggestions on how to overcome the divergent views.

However, the paramount importance of making a satisfactory final result is so obvious that the question of the methods to be applied should be a secondary consideration.

I fully endorse the views that agriculture should not be left aside. However, it is well-known that trade in agricultural products presents special and complex problems which do not lend themselves to easy and ready-made solutions. For this reason an automatically operating plan might not prove suitable for most agricultural and food products. We have an open mind on how to proceed in this field. However, as regards the major items I do feel that it might prove a realistic approach to negotiate commodity agreements involving prices, supply and demand as a first step towards solving the problems in the agricultural field, which for so long has been on our minds.

As regards exceptions, which should be kept to a bare minimum, I would suggest that a percentage rule be avoided. Such a rule might easily induce countries to padding their lists up to the limit prescribed. Other countries which have special problems might find themselves unable to live up to a percentage requirement.

It is of paramount importance that serious consideration be given to non-tariff barriers to trade. The aim should be to see to it that such barriers as far as possible do not reduce the effects of tariff reductions or endanger the stability of concessions.

Industrialized countries should not expect to receive full reciprocity in the negotiations from the less-developed countries. At the same time it appears highly desirable that all countries take part in the negotiations. We are all getting increasingly interdependent and we need to discuss our problems together and try to find solutions in common. This goes especially for a forum like the GATT. In the same way as more developed countries, small or big and irrespective of their stage of industrial development, have to give and take in this organization, the less-developed countries should in some way show their goodwill to contribute. And the contribution we would
like them to give is in the way of assurances regarding their future policies
not in the order of sacrifices today. From this point of view I find for
instance merit in the American proposal that less-developed countries might
declare themselves willing to take part in confrontations on commercial
policies.

All these special problems could be dealt with more in detail by a trade
negotiations committee. But we must reach the fundamental decisions now.
We should not leave this room without having given a firm enough mandate to
the Committee to enable it to bring to a speedy and fruitful end the preparations
necessary for these historical trade negotiations.