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

I wish to make a brief comment on the position of my Government regarding the Agenda Item I.

My Government fully recognizes the increasing importance and urgency of the expansion of trade of developing countries. We consider that the achievement of an increase in the export earnings of developing countries will not only assist developing countries, but it will also be in the interest of the entire free nations including Japan. It is from this consideration that my Government is determined to make a meaningful contribution to the success of the work of GATT in the field.

We have before us the specific Programme of Action submitted by the less-developed countries. While there are exceptional cases where my Government finds it difficult to take action on certain products, I can assure you that it is the intention of my Government to make utmost efforts for the reduction or elimination of existing trade barriers wherever less-developed countries would be main beneficiaries.

Indeed, Japan has been striving to eliminate or ease its own trade barriers to the import of such commodities which the developing countries have great interest in exporting. Import restrictions on the two most important tropical
products, namely, coffee and cocoa beans have been removed and import duties now in effect are as low as 10 per cent and 5 per cent respectively.

In regard to new preferences suggested in connexion with Point (viii) of the Action Programme, we think that this is a very difficult problem to deal with, but we are prepared to participate in the study of the problem.

END