In recent years the work in GATT has been more and more concentrated on matters related to the problems of less-developed countries. In the field of direct technical assistance the demand on the resources of GATT has been on an increasing scale. The following is a summary of a report by the Executive Secretary on technical assistance activities in GATT in 1963, and the decision taken thereon by the Contracting Parties at their current session.

In-Service Training Programme in Geneva. As in the previous eight years there were, in 1963, two training courses on commercial policy and GATT matters for officials holding fellowships granted by the United Nations Technical Assistance authorities - one course for English-speaking and one for French-speaking participants. (A new course opened in February 1964). Some 130 government officials have gone through these courses in the past nine years. Experience has shown that this training course has been of considerable value to the developing countries, especially those which have only recently acquired full autonomy in the conduct of their foreign trade.

Joint GATT/ECA courses in Africa. This series of short courses, held in Africa with the full collaboration and assistance of the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations technical assistance authorities, is aimed at acquainting African Government officials with general trade problems and the actual conduct of import-export business. Two such courses were held in 1963 at Abidjan and Kampala. The reactions of the governments which sent participants to the African courses had been exceedingly favourable.

Assistance to Newly-Independent States in connexion with Commercial Policy Problems

During 1963, several special projects were undertaken. First, at the request of the governments, secretariat officials were sent to Libya and to Somalia to render assistance on matters relating to commercial policy. A GATT team of experts to study problems relating to the customs tariffs of Uganda, Tanganyika and Kenya visited East Africa in February 1964.
Views of member governments. In the discussion of this report the representatives of Canada, India, Federal Republic of Germany, Yugoslavia, Uganda, Nigeria, European Economic Community, Indonesia, Czechoslovakia, Argentina, Ghana, United States, Sweden and the United Arab Republic congratulated the Executive Secretary on the above three aspects of GATT's technical assistance activities. There was general agreement that this work was of great practical value and should be continued and, where possible, extended. The representatives mentioned above especially indicated that their governments would be willing to consider any proposals for the further intensification of these programmes.