In May last, the adoption by the Ministers of GATT countries of their resolution was a first important step forward in the preparation of the multilateral trade negotiations which we still today like to refer to as the Kennedy Round, in homage to the great statesman to whose initiative we owe this new action undertaken within GATT to give fresh impetus to the expansion of international trade. The principles and directives set forth in the Ministerial Resolution of 21 May 1963 have indeed afforded a more concrete basis for the current discussions among participating countries on the elaboration of a trade negotiating plan covering both industrial and agricultural products.

Nearly a year has passed, and much work has been done in the various sub-committees and working parties which, under the auspices of the Trade Negotiations Committee, have sought to draw up rules and methods for the conduct of the various negotiations, and if today we do not yet have a negotiating plan fully defined in every respect, that is due solely to the fact that the problems for consideration were many and complex, and that account necessarily had to be taken, in negotiations of such scope as those on which we are about to embark, of the requests of a great many countries whose economic and tariff structures are dissimilar and sometimes even divergent.

Despite the difficulties encountered, I believe that progress has been made in the preparatory work done so far, which must not be underestimated.
The proposals which it presented last December were a practical demonstra-
tion of the European Economic Community’s firm resolve to contribute to the
search for solutions satisfactory to all participating countries. The
proposals presented by the United States and by other participating countries
have also been evidence of the co-operative spirit and the efforts which our
partners have unflaggingly applied in order to bring closer together positions
which were divergent at the outset. The problems still before us are very
difficult and they must be solved, in regard to both the negotiations on
industrial products and those relating to agricultural products, but in my
view, work on the various problems has reached a degree of maturity which
justifies my optimism as to agreement being possible in the fairly near
future on solutions acceptable to all of us.

What counts most at this juncture is that all participating countries should
demonstrate their firm political resolve to reach a successful outcome in the
trade negotiations which have today entered the crucial phase. My presence at
this meeting is precisely an indication of the special interest which my
Government attaches to a positive result from these negotiations.

The endeavour in which we are all now engaged within GATT will undoubtedly
have great influence on GATT’s possibilities for continuing to be the most
valid international instrument for seeking appropriate solutions to the
problems of world trade.

We must consider this endeavour with particular attention, not only because
it offers the means of achieving further expansion in trade between highly
industrialized countries, but also because as we all know, it affords a unique
opportunity to tackle, in their proper perspective, the problems facing the
developing countries. It is superfluous for me to recall that at this moment
we are all engaged in the work of the World Trade and Development Conference
and that we must, therefore, make every effort to show that in these GATT
multilateral trade negotiations we are taking due account of the requests made
by developing countries.

I believe that if we all make the necessary efforts for these negotiations
to succeed, we shall furnish the most convincing proof that GATT - subject of
course to certain adjustments - is and will in future continue to be the most
effective instrument for creating the requisite conditions for the increasing
expansion of world trade, within a framework which takes account of the needs
of all participating countries, whether great or small, industrialized or
still in the process of development. In the coming months we must therefore
multiply our efforts to overcome the remaining difficulties, for if we were
to fail we would find ourselves in a situation in which any possibility for the
orderly development of world trade would be affected and the very existence
of GATT would be in jeopardy.

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On the basis of the directives adopted by the Council of the European Economic Community, the EEC delegation will continue actively to co-operate with the delegations of other participating countries. So far as my country is concerned, I can assure you that within the Community institutions, it will do its utmost so that the current negotiations may advance in the most satisfactory manner.

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