Now when we have gathered here to open formally these most important negotiations, let me first recall the positive attitude which Sweden has taken from the very beginning towards this Conference and the ideas behind it. This is in itself only natural bearing in mind our traditional liberal policy in trade matters.

It is no use concealing the fact that so far we have not been able to achieve the speedy results which we had hoped for. We regret this. However we understand that the complexity of the problems before us is such that we could not avoid time-consuming technical examinations, connected especially with the negotiating plan. Some progress has, however, been made and we for our part sincerely hope that this official opening of the Conference will mark the beginning of a successful phase of the negotiations. This is of special significance in order to reduce the obstacles to trade in Western Europe and of course also to the further development of world trade.

Let me in this context stress the importance we attach to these negotiations as a means to improve the export possibilities of developing countries. Early and substantial results are of vital significance to them.
The attention of developing countries has been drawn to the importance of a successful outcome of the Kennedy Round for various problems dealt with at the World Trade Conference in which we all take an active part. Their representatives have thus pointed out how anxious they are to see the Kennedy Round result in swift and concrete measures. It is only natural, Mr. Chairman, that we should during this meeting draw the necessary conclusions from this situation. In dealing with the Kennedy negotiations we must, as I see it, to a greater extent than we have done up till now focus our attention on the problems of developing countries.

This means, Mr. Chairman, that the need for a forceful move in order to bring the Kennedy Round to an early and successful end now is more important than ever. There should be no doubt of the urgency of our task and the significance of the outcome for the world community as a whole as well as for the future of the GATT.

Furthermore, to be more specific, we should of course in our endeavours give special consideration to products of interest to developing countries and not include these products in exception lists. But this is not enough. We should as far as possible also agree to reduce our tariffs on such products by more than 50 per cent and at an earlier stage than other tariffs.

Now I would like to outline briefly how we look at other problems before us.

I have already indicated that we like other EFTA countries fully support the idea of a 50 per cent linear cut. We believe that it is of paramount importance that we confirm our decision from last year that exceptions should be kept to a bare minimum. We for our part intend to start the negotiations without tabling any exceptions. Quite another thing is, of course, that we expect balance between our concessions and those of our trading partners.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to refer to the specific position of countries like Sweden with a very low average level of tariffs. As you will recall this problem was dealt with and recognized by Ministers last year.

So far we have not put forward specific proposals in this connexion. I do not intend to do so now. This is, as I trust you will understand, not possible before we have made more progress in the establishment of the major negotiating rules.
This leads me to the question of tariff disparities. Although we are aware of this problem we did not ourselves bring this matter up for discussion. We understand that it presents a specific problem for the Community and we are anxious to do our part in order to find a solution. Like other countries we have accepted the formula suggested by the EEC as a basis for our deliberations.

Sweden has all the time been convinced of the importance for the negotiations as a whole that we agree on as automatic rules as possible. Furthermore the criteria used for identification of tariff disparities should limit the scope of these rules and thus at the same time render the whole exercise more manageable. This is also true as regards the so-called third country problem: that is how to safeguard that third countries should not be impaired by the application of disparity rules. Sweden has as you know submitted a compromise formula intended to take care of this problem.

With regard to agriculture I feel we should as soon as possible agree on a clear definition of agricultural products; this is important also for our work in the industrial sector. We have ourselves made some suggestions in this respect and we are quite willing to use the first twenty-four chapters of the Brussels Nomenclature as a starting point. Some minor deviations from this schedule might well prove desirable.

I find it natural that all agricultural questions including the different types of non-tariff barriers to trade in farm products are dealt with exclusively in the agricultural committee and its special groups.

We should, Mr. Chairman, recognize the great importance of the work geared to long-term agreements for the main agricultural products. Groups for cereals and meat have already been established. It is now timely to set up a group for dairy products and later we might consider long-term agreements for other commodities.

Real negotiations do of course imply, as I see it, that interested countries should be allowed to be represented by observers in the groups. Membership should furthermore be extended. Sweden has formally applied for membership in the Cereals Group.

We must furthermore not forget the importance of non-tariff barriers. Various liberalization measures are necessary here if we want to avoid frustrating the results which we expect in the tariff field. A practical way to deal with this question might be to begin by setting up small groups for considering the main barriers in this field.
The Committee dealing with non-tariff barriers has also been entrusted with the task to seek ways and means for Poland’s participation in the trade negotiations. Let me in this connexion only express the great interest of my Government to see this work brought to a successful end.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, again let me emphasize the importance of our confirming, here and now, the aims of the forthcoming negotiations and our intention to achieve early and substantial results.