Mr Chairman, our Government feels that this meeting in itself signifies — and this has already been pointed out by many speakers — that the political will that was evidenced by the ministerial meeting of a year ago has not altered. Rather, we feel that we are expressly reasserting this will, which resulted in the terms of reference drawn up by the Ministers a year ago and which has led to the holding of the Kennedy Round of trade negotiations. This is a first observation which we are pleased to make, because it means that our goal has not changed.

Now, Mr Chairman, it is clear that our objectives must be translated into positive resolutions and it is in this sense that we subscribe to the opinion already expressed by many delegations both yesterday and today that during the last twelve months we have not progressed in the preparation of the negotiations as we thought we would a year ago. This is an obvious fact which is recognized by all.

We note that these delays are concentrated in many sectors, and not only those which most directly affect the developing countries. They may be found both in the tariff disparities as well as in negotiations on agriculture; the cutting of customs duties by 50 per cent and the question of the participation of less-developed countries; non-tariff barriers and the work of the groups on meats and cereals. In other words, the slowness of the work affects us all.

In common with other speakers we wish to record our concern because today, one year after the ministerial meeting of 1963, we are still not ready to initiate the negotiations as such. Time is not working with us but rather against us, and we must proceed with a positive criterion and quickly in order to dissipate the infinite number of questions facing us concerning the negotiations, and which have no answer at present.
My Government gives its full support to the objectives and the purposes of the Kennedy Round. We feel that this negotiation can constitute an exceptional link in economic relations and thus strengthen GATT, thereby affording a positive demonstration of the way in which this organization can contribute to the liberalization of trade.

We look upon the Kennedy Round as the means not only of contributing to a greater European unity, an aspect which has been highlighted by a number of speakers, but something even vaster, namely, of bringing closer together the industrialized and developing worlds.

In our opinion, the purposes of the Kennedy Round go much beyond its immediate economic goal and enter fully into the field of political relations. It must be recognized that the gap between industrialized countries and developing countries is becoming wider and wider. This process must be corrected, if the true final purpose of these negotiations for our countries is to be achieved.

The mere mention of this aspect is evidence of the importance which we attribute to the trade negotiations. As has been pointed out many times the Kennedy Round must be looked upon as a whole. The way in which it is held, as well as its chances of success, depend on progress being made simultaneously on all fronts. We do not conceive of partial solutions which do not benefit all the contracting parties. GATT must, through the Kennedy negotiations, show its ability to favour equally the industrialized and the less-developed countries, thus meeting the challenge given to us by the unavoidable need, which can no longer be put off, of raising standards of living in all parts of the world.

The responsibility for all is very heavy and it is in this spirit that we repeat our wishes for the success of the negotiations. We are doing it with the caution imposed by the slowness of the process of the past twelve months but, at the same time, with a firm will to achieve constructive solutions.