STATEMENT MADE BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES,
AMBASSADOR J.A. LACARTE, URUGUAY, AT THE CONCLUSION
OF THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, GENEVA, 25 MARCH 1965

We have come to the end of our agenda and we must now survey what has been
done before declaring closed this twenty-second session of the Contracting Parties.

A number of important matters have been under consideration in the past three
weeks and one might conclude that those connected directly or indirectly with the
already marked tendency towards the formation and strengthening of regional
economic groupings have been in the forefront of attention.

This phenomenon, which from day to day, offers increasingly marked
characteristics in every region of the world is having a special impact on GATT.
This could not be otherwise for, having regard to the contents of Article XXIV,
the General Agreement has particularly significant functions in this respect.

At its inception in 1947 and 1948, GATT was envisaged as an arrangement to
which recourse would be had only from time to time without major consequences on
international trade. But it has become a movement which affects the interests of
all the countries which participate in GATT, whether they belong to one or other
of the regional groupings or whether precisely they do not belong to any of them.

Today the re-adjustment of obligations and advantages on the world scale
brought about by the growing recourse to common markets and free-trade areas raises
far-reaching questions concerning the future orientation of GATT and we shall have
an opportunity to ponder over this before the next session. In doing so, we shall
certainly bear in mind an interesting fact mentioned at the beginning of the
session which is drawing to a close today - namely, that already a majority of the
contracting parties belong to or are associated with one or other of the groupings
in question.
I have no doubt that this topic in all its many aspects will not wane in importance in our future deliberations but that on the contrary it will take on growing significance, thus reflecting the general tendency to which I have referred. I believe that alongside the individual existing situations which all deserve respect, we must think of the traditional rôle of GATT as a regulating element in international trade and we must think of the common interest of the Contracting Parties that this orientative capacity be maintained to the advantage of all the countries which belong to it.

This question, of course, is not the only one to which delegations have given their attention. Just to cite one more matter, I shall recall the progress report presented to the Contracting Parties on the Trade Negotiations Conference (Kennedy Round). Coinciding with the twenty-second session, fundamental progress has been made: agreement has been reached on the conditions for participation of the less-developed countries and on the rules to govern the negotiations on agricultural products; in addition, arrangements have been formalized for the participation of a number of other countries.

The full success of the Kennedy Round as envisaged by the Ministers at their meeting will stimulate world trade, be beneficial to all the participating States, will bring the more advanced nations and the less advanced ones close together, and will strengthen GATT as a positive element in the field of economic relations. Any of these objectives taken individually justifies whatever effort is made to lead the negotiations to a successful close. Taken together they constitute the prerequisite for co-existence between nations and the inescapable need to raise standards of living.

I should like to urge the delegations of countries which have not yet done so, to remind their governments of the desirability of accepting in the near future the new Part IV of GATT on Trade and Development. This Chapter, which contains provisions additional to those in the General Agreement, is already being provisionally applied to the extent permitted under their existing legislation by fifty-one countries. Twenty-six ratifications are still required for its definitive adoption. The contribution which Part IV makes to the existence of the less-developed countries seems to call for its prompt acceptance. The recently established Committee on Trade and Development is called upon to carry out a rôle of prime importance in connexion with the achievement of the objectives set forth in Part IV. We have already approved its first report, and I have no doubt that the measures which have been submitted to you in regard to primary products, preferences, the revision of certain articles and other questions of equal significance will give rise to proposals and recommendations of great importance.
A few days ago the Contracting Parties took a two-fold and significant step in designating as Director-General Mr. Eric Wyndham White who was until now Executive Secretary; two-fold because on the one hand they confirmed the importance which has been attributed to GATT in the constellation of elements concerned in international economic questions and on the other hand they confirmed their support for, and confidence in, the person who has been serving them without interruption for the past eighteen years. While not wishing to repeat today the ideas which I had pleasure in stating on that occasion, I should like to make express reference to the action taken by the Contracting Parties in this regard.

This afternoon the Contracting Parties have elected their officers for the coming year, and they have paid me the high honour of appointing me as Chairman. I should like to express my gratitude for this distinction and my unswerving intention to serve you calmly and in complete equanimity, basing myself at all times on the interests and objectives pursued jointly by all the countries which participate in GATT.

I wish to pay a tribute to the intelligence and ability of the first Vice-Chairman and the two Chairmen who have been elected at the same time, as well as to the new Chairmen of the Council and of the Committee on Trade and Development. The administration of the Contracting Parties is thus in safe hands.

We have all deeply regretted the absence of our outgoing Chairman, Mr. Warren, who was kept in Canada by the responsibilities of his high office. I should like to express to him through the intermediary of the Canadian delegation here, the gratitude of the Contracting Parties for the balanced, intelligent and expert way in which he conducted our discussions during his two years as Chairman. As a material sign of this gratitude I am handing to the head of the Canadian delegation this gavel which was used by Mr. Warren during his term of office and which bears a plaque with an appropriate inscription.

Having carried out this pleasant duty I wish to thank the Director-General and his efficient team of collaborators without exception for the dynamic work which they have done during our deliberations.

I wish you all a good journey back to your countries and declare closed this twenty-second session.