Note by the Executive Secretary

1. As in the four preceding years, the GATT Secretariat has organized in 1959 training courses for officials holding United Nations Technical Assistance Operations fellowships. These fellows were officials from countries in process of economic development. This year again, the courses were open, not only to officials of governments parties to the GATT, but also to officials of other governments members of the United Nations. After the demands from contracting parties to the GATT were met, it has been possible to accept candidates from Poland, Thailand and the Philippines.

2. Apart from the officials who followed a full course in the GATT Secretariat, one official holding a fellowship of the UNTAO spent several weeks at the GATT Secretariat as part of a study on European organizations. This official was:

   Mr. K. TAKAHASHI, Research Section, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Tokyo.

3. Finally, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany asked the Executive Secretary whether it could send, without any financial commitment, one of its officials to take part in the Seventh Course. The Executive Secretary agreed to accept this official, in view of the fact that the number of UNTAO fellows was less than originally contemplated.

4. The seventh training course started in January 1959 and the group of fellows from the UNTAO which attended the full course consisted of the following officials:

   Mr. Kow Nkensen ARKAAD, Assistant Commercial Officer, Ministry of Trade, Ghana
   Mr. Sambasiva NARASIMHAN, Second Secretary, High Commission of India in the United Kingdom
   Mr. Kiyoshi TAKAHASHI, Vice-Assistant of Chief of Section, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Japan
   Mr. Zdzislaw KURARZ, Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Trade, Poland
   Mr. James GIRDLESTONE, Private Secretary to the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.
5. The eighth group of fellows arrived at Geneva at the beginning of July. It consists of the six following officials:

M. Alexandre PARASKEVAS, Chief of Division, Direction of Customs, Ministry of Finance, Greece

Mr. Muhammed NUHIUDDIN, Research Officer, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Pakistan

Mr. Arturo NESANA, Technical Assistant, Tariff Commission, Republic of the Philippines

Mr. Harry Cecil CUMMING, Collector at the Department of Customs and Excise, Assistant to Controller, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland

Mr. Vicharn NIVATVONGS, Chief of Economic Planning Division, Department of Economic Relations, Thailand

M. Nejat SOZMEN, Rapporteur, Ministry of Commerce, Foreign Trade Department, Turkey.

6. The training programme and the training methods did not differ substantially from those applied during the preceding years. As previously, particular emphasis was given to the practical ways in which commercial policy is linked to the formulation and application of economic development programmes; a number of practical and technical questions relating to customs policy and regulations were discussed in detail and the fellows were invited to prepare notes on specific problems of commercial policy or trade intelligence. These notes were prepared under the guidance of the officers of the divisions concerned and were discussed fully with the officials of the Secretariat. As usual, the fellows attended the meetings of the Fourteenth Session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES and of the Committees held during the year; they were briefed before the meetings on the problems to be discussed and after the meetings there was an exchange of views on the various points raised in the course of the discussions.

7. In view of the interest shown by the fellows and their governments in the study trips, each course is followed by a tour of about a fortnight, the object of which is to give to the participants the opportunity of seeing how certain practical problems are tackled and solved in countries having experience of such problems. At the end of the second course of 1958, the participants, accompanied by an officer of the Secretariat, visited the United Kingdom, France and Germany in order to study the system of temporary admission and drawback, and the effects upon international trade of the competition in various industrial uses between natural raw materials and man-made materials. In London, they received information on temporary importation and drawback at H.M. Custom and Excise; and had conversations with representatives of three important textile firms. In Paris, they studied the system of temporary admission, and visited a large manufacture of plastic materials. In Hamburg, they visited two large synthetic rubber plants and had discussions with rubber traders.  

1A detailed report on the study trip has been prepared and may be obtained at the GATT Secretariat Offices (Spec(59)1).
8. In June 1959, the participants in the training scheme, accompanied by a member of the Secretariat, visited Germany, the United Kingdom and Austria. The main subjects of the study tour were: export promotion, and the methods for marketing national and imported raw materials. They also visited the Hamburg free port installations. In Austria, they studied methods of export promotion and the organization of the Tobacco monopoly; in Germany, they studied methods of export promotion, the marketing of tobacco and the usefulness of labour-intensive production; in London, they also studied export promotion, as well as the methods applied by the British Government in connection with economic development in the colonies; they also visited the Cocoa Market and Plantation House, two large firms dealing with the importation and processing of cocoa, and the London Metal Exchange.  

9. The Executive Secretary wishes to express his appreciation for the valuable assistance which the host countries have extended to the secretariat in the arrangement of these trips. After several years' experience, there is no doubt that these study trips are an essential part of the training course. The host countries have collaborated fully with the Secretariat in the organization of these trips which have been considered as most valuable by all the participants.

10. A similar trip will be organized at the end of the eight training course. Moreover, at the end of August, the Secretariat has arranged with the Swiss Government and the Federation of Watchmakers a short visit to Bern and to Bienne during which the United Nations Fellows had an opportunity of discussing with the Director-General of the Customs and with officials of the Department of Commerce a number of concrete problems relating to the administration of customs and to commercial policy, and to visit one of the most modern watch factories in Switzerland. The Executive Secretary wishes to use this opportunity for thanking the Swiss Government, as well as the Federation of Watchmakers and the management of OMEGA for their co-operation and for the generous welcome they have extended to the trainees during this study tour.

11. The new procedure established by the UNTAO as from the beginning of 1959 for the submission of candidatures has somewhat complicated the granting of scholarships. The officials were not familiar with the methods of the United Nations Technical Operations, and some governments were not aware that the requests would have to come in Category I of the country programme. In a number of cases, no funds were available under the country programme to finance GATT fellowships and, if the UNTAO had applied strictly the regulations, it would have been impossible to organize the training course during the second half of 1959 since only one country could rely on the country programme for the financing of the GATT fellowship. Fortunately, the UNTAO has been generous enough to grant other fellowships on the basis of certain savings which they were able to make in other parts of the Technical Assistance Programme. But the UNTAO has drawn the attention of the Secretariat to the fact that this exceptional assistance which they had extended to the GATT this year would not be available in the future. It will therefore be necessary for the countries concerned to see to it that their requests for GATT fellowships in 1960 and the following years are duly included in Category I of their country programme.

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1 A detailed report on the study trip has been prepared and may be obtained at the GATT Secretariat Offices (Spec(59)89)
12. There have been cases where the official to whom a fellowship had been granted was unable to attend the course and where no advance notice was given either to the GATT Secretariat or to the UNTAOU; the money which has been earmarked for such fellowships has not been used at a time when a number of applicants could not be accommodated. In view of the small amount of money available for GATT fellowships and the number of applications received, it appears essential that the opportunities offered to the governments should not be reduced by lack of co-ordination between the officials to whom fellowships have been granted and their governments, and the GATT Secretariat.

13. In order to meet certain practical difficulties of the UN Technical Assistance Operations, it has been agreed that, as from 1960, the GATT training courses would start in March and September each year.