NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Delegations will recall that, at its Session of December 1992, the CONTRACTING PARTIES invited the Group on Environmental Measures and International Trade to be closely involved, within the scope of its terms of reference, in work in GATT on the UNCED follow-up with respect to making trade and environment policies mutually supportive (Agenda 21, Chapter 2: Introduction and Section B). The CONTRACTING PARTIES also agreed that the Council of Representatives should hold a Council meeting devoted to UNCED follow-up to review, and as necessary supplement, the work that is underway in GATT relating to this issue. The Group was invited to contribute to that review by reporting to the special session on the progress they are making with the matters referred to them above.

Therefore, in my capacity as Chairman of the Group on Environmental Measures and International Trade, I have pleasure in submitting the following two items which constitute the Group’s report to this Council meeting on the progress it is making with respect to the UNCED follow-up activities with which it was tasked:

- My reports, as Chairman of the Group on Environmental Measures and International Trade, to the 48th and 49th Sessions of the CONTRACTING PARTIES. Discussions in the Group in 1993 indicate that the Group considers that the three items of its agenda (i.e., trade provisions in multilateral environmental agreements vis-à-vis GATT principles and provisions; transparency of national environmental regulations likely to have trade effects; and new forms of packaging and labelling requirements) anticipated a significant number of the UNCED recommendations to the GATT. These include recommendations 2.22(c) relating to transparency, 2.22(f) relating to environmental regulations or standards such as packaging and labelling requirements, and 2.22(j) relating to the relationship between GATT provisions and multilateral environmental agreements. The Group’s past work on this agenda, in the Group’s view, constitutes an important contribution to GATT’s UNCED follow-up task, and I believe that my two reports to the CONTRACTING PARTIES provide a comprehensive and detailed overview of the progress made.

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The minutes of the Group's meetings of July and October 1993 and January 1994 in which it substantively debated the UNCED recommendations contained in Section B of Chapter 2 of Agenda 21. These are contained in documents TRE/12, TRE/13, and TRE/14 respectively. I would like particularly to draw attention to the Appendix in TRE/12 which includes my first impressions on the Group's UNCED follow-up work, and provides indicators of the direction in which this work may move in the future. In addition, TRE/14 records an exchange of views on the possible ways in which a report could be forwarded to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

I submit this report satisfied that the Group has made a significant contribution towards fulfilling the UNCED recommendations with which it was tasked, and that delegations are committed to carrying on with this portion of the Agenda 21 follow-up work in the context of and with the aim of accelerating sustainable development.

Ambassador Hidetoshi Ukawa
Chairman