The following communication has been received from the delegation of the Ivory Coast.

The trend in the world economic situation shows clearly that while the international trade situation is critical for all countries, the consequences are still more serious and more disquieting for developing countries dependent on exports of their primary products. For developing countries, the harmful effects of this world crisis are reflected in the following features:

- slower growth of their exports;
- considerable reduction of their export earnings as a result of relentless deterioration in prices of raw materials;
- constant deterioration of terms of trade;
- growing deficit in their balance of payments.

When one considers the economic and social development prospects of these developing countries, one can see that their situation is further aggravated by the application of certain protectionist measures adopted by some industrialized countries, together with the negative effects of inflation, unemployment and fluctuating exchange rates which are undoubtedly preventing these countries from fully attaining economic take-off allowing them to achieve the objectives set under their economic, social and cultural development programme.

The delegation of the Ivory Coast considers, furthermore, that while for most developing countries the problem of access to markets of industrialized countries remains a major concern, it is also important for them that this concept of market access be examined in a broader perspective so as to allow identification of all decisive factors hampering access for primary products to the markets of developed countries.
In the light of these considerations which show that the trade situation for export products of most developing countries is becoming more and more disquieting, the delegation of the Ivory Coast considers that the time has come when the CONTRACTING PARTIES should examine very seriously certain problems which bear on commodity trade and that, consequently, it would be a grave error to disregard them.

Examination of these topics in the context of the Ministerial meeting is fully justified for the following reasons:

1. These problems are of concern to the great majority of developing countries which make up two-thirds of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the General Agreement.

2. Part IV of the General Agreement, which clearly refers to the export earnings of developing countries in its Articles: XXXVI, XXXVII and XXXVIII, has not been fully implemented since 1964.

3. It seems urgent that the least-developed countries should increase their export share in world trade and be better integrated in the multilateral trading system.

Accordingly, the delegation of the Ivory Coast proposes that the following problems be brought to the Ministers' attention and that concrete decisions or recommendations be made.

1. Problems of deterioration of terms of trade and instability of commodity prices.

2. Problems of excessive indebtedness of traditional oil-importing developing countries and of their balance-of-payments disequilibrium.

3. Problems of protectionism and of trade liberalization for export products of developing countries.


In this regard the delegation of the Ivory Coast wishes to make the following proposals concerning the three parts of the final document.

In accordance with the principles and objectives set forth in Articles XXXVI, XXXVII and XXXVIII of Part IV of the General Agreement, the Ministers should:
Part I of Document - Political Commitment

Pledge themselves to take the necessary action for urgent formulation of measures designed to stabilize commodity prices at fair, equitable and remunerative levels; and to ensure that exporters of these products receive the best advantages offered by the GATT system.

Part II of Document - Decisions

1. Grant high priority to lowering and eliminating obstacles to trade expansion for products of special export interest to developing countries; Grant duty-free treatment to all products coming from least-developed countries.

2. Refrain from introducing new non-tariff barriers on products imported from least-developed countries - and maintain the stand-still pending progressive elimination of those measures according to a pre-established programme.

3. Avoid applying protectionist measures which would slow consumption growth for primary products, whether crude or processed, when such measures hamper the development process of least-developed countries.

4. Maintain and effectively apply the provisions of Part IV of the General Agreement and observe the principles of the Enabling Clause and of differential treatment granted to developing countries under paragraph 3(c) of the Decision of 28 November 1979 in order positively to respond to the development, financial and trade needs of least-developed countries.

5. Recommend that the CTD include in its work programme problems concerning commodity prices and indebtedness of developing countries in order to determine their impact on participation by those countries in international trade and on their economic development programmes; request the CTD to make recommendations to the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

Part III of Document - Programme

Recommend that the GATT secretariat undertake systematic studies concerning relations between trade and aid to least-developed countries, and in addition develop close collaboration with the international financial institutions with a view to elaborating concrete measures in favour of least-developed contracting parties.