1. The Working Party reviewed the progress that has been made by contracting parties towards the abolition of consular formalities in accordance with the Recommendation of 7 November 1952 (BISD 1st supplement, page 25).

2. The Working Party noted with satisfaction that a number of countries have removed, and some others have relaxed, their requirements for consular formalities since the Recommendation was adopted. The Government of the United States, which removed the general requirement, should be mentioned in this connexion. The United Kingdom has removed its few requirements and France has limited the obligation to present consular visas to a few countries which do not grant reciprocity and to a small number of products.

3. The Working Party also noted with satisfaction that France and Ceylon have promised the full suppression of their fees and consular requirements in the near future, if possible before the end of 1956.

4. The following seven contracting parties still require consular formalities in a few exceptional circumstances:

   - Belgium
   - Ceylon
   - France
   - Greece
   - Indonesia
   - Sweden
   - United States
   - United States of America

5. There are a number of countries, especially in Latin America, which still have a general requirement of consular formalities, namely:

   - Brazil
   - Chile
   - Cuba
   - Dominican Republic
   - Haiti
   - Nicaragua
   - Peru
   - Turkey
   - Uruguay

6. Details concerning the requirements of the countries enumerated in paragraphs 4 and 5 have been reviewed by a sub-group, the report of which is annexed.

7. The information received in this connexion shows that many countries have not conformed with the Recommendation of 1952 to suppress all consular formalities before the end of 1956 and to reduce the consular fees during the interim period.

Spec/232/56.
8. The Working Party discussed with the representatives of some of the countries listed in paragraphs 4 and 5 their reasons for maintaining consular requirements; the discussions were directed to finding a solution which would help these countries to overcome the obstacles to compliance with the Recommendation. Although the replies received do not give a full picture of the reasons why the governments wished to maintain consular formalities, two main reasons become clear. Firstly, the various governments take the view that consular certification provides a measure of control, especially of the export declaration concerning the origin of the product and its value. Secondly, some governments maintain these formalities for fiscal reasons.

9. The Working Party came to the conclusion that it was important to continue full support for the principles expressed in the 1952 Recommendation. It therefore suggested that the obligation included in this Recommendation should be maintained. The Working Party thought on the other hand, that it would be preferable not to replace the date at which the contracting parties have under this Recommendation been invited to conform with the obligation, but to provide that the matter should be kept under urgent review.

10. In this connexion the Working Party felt that countries which maintain consular formalities might have the possibility of replacing the requirement of consular invoices, which are the source of many inconveniences to traders, by the requirement of adding a consular visa to the commercial invoice. That such solution could be considered to be a step in the right direction is indicated by the fact that some countries already do so, and that Brazil, in connexion with its tariff reform, is considering such a change.

11. Countries requiring consular visas to control e.g. the health of imported animals, plants, etc., should consider carefully whether in the context of the Recommendation for complete abolition of consular invoices and visas the addition of visas to documents given by those best acquainted with the facts serves any useful purpose.

12. Due to the fact that it must be borne in mind that the object of the Recommendation is to complete the abolition of all consular formalities, and noting that some countries still maintaining substantial consular requirements have expressed their willingness to examine whether the formalities can be reduced during the period preceding their complete abolition, the Working Party suggests that the CONTRACTING PARTIES adopt the following decision:
(a) The Recommendation of 1952 concerning the suppression of consular formalities shall be maintained.

(b) Measures for the abolition or reduction of consular formalities should be examined urgently with a view to introducing these measures at the earliest possible date.

(c) All contracting parties maintaining consular formalities shall report to the secretariat as soon as any further progress in this matter has been achieved.

(d) The matter shall be revised again at their Twelfth Session.