PROPOSALS FOR EXPEDITING THE WORK OF
REGULAR SESSIONS OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

Proposals submitted by the Heads of Delegations for consideration by the
CONTRACTING PARTIES

Hitherto the Intersessional Committee has made little or no contribution to facilitating the work of the sessions, although this was one of the reasons for it being established. In particular the meeting which is held four to six weeks before each regular session was intended to give an opportunity for delegations to exchange views on the principal items on the agenda, and thus to clarify and define the issues in advance of the session. At the Review Session the CONTRACTING PARTIES went further and instructed the Intersessional Committee to do preparatory work on the items suggested for the agenda and if necessary to establish working parties. Neither the working methods nor the representation at meetings of the Intersessional Committee have been appropriate for these purposes and the result has been that the meeting has served little other purpose than to draw up a provisional agenda.

The Intersessional Committee was also expected to ensure that there would be full documentation available for all items submitted for the agenda. In this purpose, too, it has failed to prove an effective mechanism.

In these circumstances the efforts of the CONTRACTING PARTIES should be directed towards increasing the effectiveness of the Intersessional Committee along the following lines:

1. The provisional agenda for each regular session should be drawn up and circulated to contracting parties at least five weeks before the opening of the session.

2. The Intersessional Committee should meet three weeks before the opening of each regular session.

3. Additional items proposed for the agenda should be submitted to the CONTRACTING PARTIES under "Other Business", and their inclusion should depend upon the agreement of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

4. The Intersessional Committee should examine the provisional agenda and, if it considers that the accompanying documentation is not adequate to enable any item to be dealt with readily by the CONTRACTING PARTIES, should recommend that the item be excluded from the agenda, unless there are special difficulties in submitting the documentation at the time the item is proposed or very soon thereafter,
5. The Intersessional Committee should examine all the items included in the provisional agenda with a view to clarifying and defining the issues involved.

6. The Intersessional Committee should establish a technical Working Party to begin work on questions relating to Trade and Customs Regulations and Schedules and a Budget Working Party. The Technical and Budget Working Parties thus established should continue if necessary until the opening of the regular session.

7. If the CONTRACTING PARTIES agree to the proposal in paragraph 3 above, it will be necessary to amend Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure as follows:

"The provisional agenda for each session shall be drawn up by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairman and shall be communicated to the contracting parties at least three/five weeks before the date of meeting. It shall be open to any contracting party to propose items for inclusion in this provisional agenda up to [one month/six weeks from the date of meeting]."