Committee II, established under the GATT Programme for the Expansion of International Trade, will meet at Geneva from 25 January to 12 February to conduct consultations with eight contracting parties, namely Finland, France, New Zealand, Austria, Norway, United States, Italy and Japan.

Background

At the thirteenth session, in November 1958, following the discussions in which a number of trade ministers took part — discussions which were based largely on the Haberler Report — the CONTRACTING PARTIES decided to formulate a co-ordinated programme of action directed towards the further expansion of international trade and they established three Committees to carry out the programme.

Committee I was to examine the possibility of arranging a further general round of multilateral tariff negotiations within the framework of the GATT. The work of Committee II covered the agricultural policies of Member governments and in particular it was charged with examining the effects of agricultural protectionist measures on international trade. Committee III had before it the broad problem of the difficulties which face the less-developed countries in expanding their export trade with the rest of the world, thus enabling them to earn the income necessary to promote their economic development.

Committee II adopted a plan for regular consultations with all contracting parties about their agricultural policies. These consultations are focussed on the effects of agricultural policies on international trade. Each contracting party consults in its turn and there is, first, an examination of its general agricultural policy followed by more detailed discussion of its policies in relation to specific commodities, such as dairy products, meat, cereals, sugar, vegetable oils and fish.

In September 1959 consultations were held at Geneva with the first group of countries, namely Australia, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Union of South Africa and the United Kingdom. Consultations were held with a second group of countries, namely Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, Malaya and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland during the fifteenth session at Tokyo.

The next round of consultations on agricultural policies will be held at Geneva from 28 March to 15 April 1960.

The members of Committee II are:

Australia  Dominican Republic  India  Switzerland
Austria  Finland  Italy  Union of
Brazil  France  Kingdom of the
Canada  Federal Republic  Netherlands
       of Germany  New Zealand
Cuba  Greece  Norway
Denmark  Greece

Chairman: Mr. G.R. Paterson (Canada)