The In-Service Training Programme at the GATT Secretariat

1. As a result of an agreement entered into between the GATT and the United Nations, the GATT secretariat has organized, since 1956, a programme of in-service training in Geneva by means of a small number of fellowships granted by the United Nations to particularly qualified officials designated by their governments to enable them to familiarize themselves with the questions dealt with within the framework of the GATT and to study the various trade policy problems encountered by under-developed countries or by countries that have recently acceded to independence.

2. Each group includes a limited number of trainees, and the courses are for a duration of about five months, beginning in February and July of each year. In making up the different groups, consideration is given, within practical possibilities, to the linguistic qualifications of the candidates, the February group being reserved for English-speaking and the July group for French-speaking candidates, in order to facilitate instruction.

3. For the programme to operate smoothly, applications are to be sent to the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations in New York, with a copy to the Executive Secretary of the GATT, not later than 30 September of each year. The nominations of candidates for the programme are required to be countersigned by a responsible official of the government concerned. The selection of the fellows is made by the UNTA on the recommendation of the Executive Secretary of the GATT.

4. In admitting candidates to this programme, preference is given to men and women holding fellowships who have completed university training in economics or similar subjects and who are permanent officials in the central government of countries which are parties to, associated with, or in process of accession to the GATT. However, in the event of vacancies, the GATT secretariat is prepared to accept holders of fellowships possessing the same qualifications and employed in the government of countries that are not parties to the GATT but are members of the United Nations, as well as holders of fellowships employed, not in the central government of countries parties to the GATT, but in the local government of such countries located in territories under separate customs jurisdiction from the metropolitan area.

5. In accepting a fellowship, the holder undertakes to spend full time in the programme of work as assigned to him by his supervisor at the GATT secretariat. At the end of his training period, he is required to submit a full report on the experience gained and on the work performed during his training.
6. During the period of the fellowship, the holder receives from the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations a stipend at the daily rate of 40 Swiss francs for the first month and 36 Swiss francs for the balance of his training period, Sunday and holidays included. This allowance is intended to cover normal living expenses of one person only. In addition, the BTAO bears the cost of that portion of the trainee's travelling expenses to and from Geneva (based on the round-trip by air, tourist class) which is not paid by his own government. BTAO also provides each trainee with a sum equivalent to US$50 to purchase books pertaining to the training programme.

7. Governments whose candidates are admitted undertake to make satisfactory arrangements to cover all expenses incurred within the trainee's home country incidental to travel abroad, including the cost of passports, visas, medical examination, clothing, etc., and to continue to pay the trainee's salary or to make other suitable arrangements for the maintenance of his dependents during his stay abroad.

8. In view of the confidential nature of the work performed at the GATT, the fellows admitted as trainees in the GATT secretariat are bound vis-à-vis their respective governments to exercise the same discretion as they would if they were still in the employ of their own government headquarters. Furthermore, they are required to take the same pledges toward the GATT organization as are required of other temporary or permanent officials.

9. The object of the training programme is to give trainees practical instruction in the procedures and methods most appropriate for dealing with such problems of a commercial and economic nature as they will have to handle in the course of their official career in the government of their own country. Apart from being instructed in matters of trade policies and in GATT problems in general, trainees are required to take an active part in the actual work performed at the secretariat.

10. The general curriculum of the training programme is as follows:

   One month in the office of the Executive Secretary for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the organizational, liaison, legal and diplomatic work of the secretariat.

   4-6 weeks in the Trade Policy Division for the purpose of gaining experience in the rules governing the multilateral system of international trade as practised within the GATT. This part of the programme is intended to familiarize trainees not only with the GATT regulations covering the various aspects of international trade, but chiefly with the experience gained in the course of recent years, and is based on concrete cases that have involved deliberations and decisions by the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

   4-6 weeks in the Trade Intelligence Division for the purpose of acquiring first-hand knowledge of the special methods used by the GATT secretariat for analysing commercial trends and deriving the proper conclusions as to the outlook for future expansion of particular markets.
During the ensuing time, the trainees are engaged in the actual daily work of the secretariat. Each trainee works with an official of the secretariat who is entrusted with the task of coaching him in his work and of instructing him in the practical working methods of an international secretariat. Usually the trainee is required to study concrete cases received for examination by the secretariat and to prepare a draft report which is then commented upon by the staff member in charge of the particular department concerned or, as the case may be, compared with the official report drawn up by the secretariat. Furthermore, during periods of sessions, trainees are given an opportunity of following the proceedings of one or more committees by acting as assistants to the secretaries of such committees. They are called upon to study the records, to prepare notes or draft reports which are subsequently compared with the final report issued by the secretariat.

During the course of the last month, the trainees undertake an educational tour of a number of nearby countries where they have the opportunity to gain first-hand insight into the application of various customs procedures, the operation of raw materials import and export transactions, export incentive methods, etc.