GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

Committee III - Expansion of Trade

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ON THE PROGRAMME OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN STUDIES

In introducing the proposals put forward in the secretariat note on the programme of development plan studies (CCM.III/118 and Add.1), the Deputy Executive Secretary pointed out that the term "development plan", as used in the secretariat note, did not mean that it was intended to study only those countries which had formally adopted a development plan but that the term had been used in a broader sense so as to apply also to governmental development policies and programmes which, in the strict sense of the term, could not be described as a development plan. It would obviously be unfortunate if the studies were to be limited to a selected group of less-developed countries who had decided to operate on the basis of a formal plan and to leave out those less-developed countries who were approaching their development problems under a different institutional set-up. The object of the exercise was to have as broad a coverage as possible, ideally covering all the less-developed countries.

It was not intended, however, to engage in a vast series of studies in order to add to the voluminous literature on development already in existence. The purpose of the studies was rather to examine the development plans and development policies of the less-developed countries in order to establish a better basis for action by the CONTRACTING PARTIES in a field of great importance. The studies were, therefore, not to be made for the sake of studying but with a view to establishing supporting material for the operations of the CONTRACTING PARTIES and for any concrete measures to be taken by them to assist the development and export trade of less-developed countries.

The proposed outline of the studies to be prepared by the secretariat did not go into great detail and had been kept deliberately sketchy to take account of the considerable differences in the problems and needs of one country as compared to another and of the differences in approaches to development programming or planning. Similarly, it had not been felt necessary to go into administrative details on how the secretariat would prepare the studies. That much should be said, however, that it was the intention to collaborate fully not only with the other agencies in the field but foremost with the countries being studied. In this connexion it would also be necessary to send a mission to the country concerned to ensure that the staff undertaking the study is fully familiar with all data, problems and policies relevant to the studies. Constant contact with the
authorities of the country being studied would be maintained. The purpose of the proposed outline was, without setting up a rigid pattern, to establish a blue-print of the studies to which the secretariat would try to adhere so that there could be as much order and parallelism between the different studies as possible in such an exercise. Undoubtedly, it would be necessary to have a certain amount of introductory information describing the economic indicators in the country under study, and the manner in which it proposed to tackle its economic problems. The focus of the paper should, however, be on the clarification of the special problems in the field of trade and development of the country concerned and information would have to be arranged around these key problems. Only by limiting documentation in this way could the studies be expected to be of help to the Committee and to other organs of the CONTRACTING PARTIES in carrying out their tasks. Certainly, these studies would prove useful for the work which the CONTRACTING PARTIES had undertaken to dismantle trade barriers on commodities of interest to the less-developed countries.

As regards the link between the trade and aid aspects of the proposed programme of studies, the examination would have to cover, by necessity, the financial as well as the trade aspects. It would be impossible to make a useful study of a development plan or of the development policy of a less-developed country without covering the financial aspects in some detail as otherwise the picture would be distorted and would lack its salient features. An important result of these studies would be to place the CONTRACTING PARTIES in a better position to carry out their rôle in the process of establishing better co-ordination in the aid and trade field, matters which obviously could not be separated.