Commenting on various proposals for establishing the fourth list of products, and the large number of items included in document Spec(63)283, the Deputy Executive Secretary recalled the procedures which had earlier been adopted by the Committee when examining the products included in Lists 1, 2 and 3, products which were now covered by the Action Programme. He emphasized that in drawing-up the fourth list it was important to bear in mind the significance of this list in terms of the Conclusions of Ministers relating to the Action Programme.

While Committee III would have to give attention to all products of export interest to less-developed countries, it would be unrealistic to assume that a sufficiently detailed examination, which would permit action to be taken by governments, could be carried out by the Committee during the course of this meeting in respect of all of the products listed in Spec(63)283. It seemed necessary, therefore, that the Group should decide, on reasons of urgency, which products should be examined first by the Committee with a view to having these products covered by the Action Programme. On the basis of such an examination and clearly spelling out its findings in respect of the products concerned, as had been done earlier in respect of the products included in Lists 1 to 3, the Committee should be in a position to recommend for adoption by the CONTRACTING PARTIES further products to be covered by the Action Programme.

This procedure did not imply that other products which were also of special interest to less-developed countries would be left aside. In fact, the examination by Committee III of further items in respect of which the less-developed countries would expect the CONTRACTING PARTIES to take the necessary measures to eliminate barriers to trade should be considered a continuing process. To facilitate further work in this direction, the secretariat would go ahead with collecting information on trade flows and barriers affecting these products.

As regards the actual selection of products to be studied first, it would seem important to consider their importance in trade, present or potential, and particular barriers affecting these products. In this connexion, the Group might bear in mind that where the barriers were predominantly in the form of tariffs, the problem would be taken up in the forthcoming trade negotiations. For instance, the comprehensive list of products of special export interest to less-developed countries might be submitted to the Trade Negotiations Committee for purposes of its work. It might be useful, therefore, to concentrate at first on those products which were faced with other than tariff barriers.

Statement made before the Ad Hoc Group of Committee III on 24 October 1963.