Item I: Measures for the Expansion of Trade of Developing Countries as a Means of Furthering their Economic Development

The subject under discussion is of particular interest to Cyprus which falls into the category of less-developed countries now forming the majority of the countries represented in the GATT. In common with such countries we are faced with a large trade deficit, which is reflected on our balance of payments. We depend largely on agriculture and mining for our livelihood. The success or failure of our current development plan will depend to a large degree on our ability to expand our exports in order to finance our increasing import requirements. This in turn will only be possible if the tariff and other barriers imposed on our exports by other countries are lifted. In spite of these difficulties the objectives of GATT constitute the cornerstone of our trade policy. The measures we have taken for the liberalization of our trade leave the door open for the largest part of our total imports. This is evidence of our adherence to the multilateral form of trade which is essentially the basis of the General Agreement.

It was very gratifying the note from your own opening speech, as well as from the most encouraging statements made by Ministers of industrialized countries, that there is a growing recognition among advanced countries of the acute economic problems which confront the developing ones.
Nobody will deny that a very serious effort is being made at this meeting to find ways and means of solving these problems.

I would suggest, however, that unlike the ministerial meeting in November of 1961 which confined itself to adoption of Resolutions, the present meeting should tackle the trade problems of less-developed countries more effectively. What is really needed, in my view, is the taking of binding decisions and the formulation of a specific Programme of Action which should be implemented within a fixed period of time under the close supervision of this organization.

In this respect the suggestions put forward to the Ministers by Committee III, which is to be congratulated for its excellent work, constitute a good basis for proceeding in a more positive way, though one or two points still call for some more elaboration.

For instance, the implementation in full of point 4 of the Programme might have some serious repercussions on the position of countries like my own whose exports depend to a very large extent on the existing system of Commonwealth preference.

I should like to conclude by an appeal to the industrial and more prosperous nations to pledge themselves to afford greater access to the exports of the less-developed countries. The trade problems of these countries must be solved in a satisfactory manner in the interests of world peace. These problems must be tackled with vision and imagination. Economic progress and social advancement cannot be secured by aid alone. It is essential that the export trade of the poorer nations should not be hampered by prohibitive tariffs and other barriers.