The European Economic Community wishes to thank this Committee for having appointed it to membership of the Drafting Group.

May I take this opportunity to indicate the spirit and general orientation underlying the participation of the six Common Market countries in the work of the Drafting Group.

First of all may I say how much the value of this work seems clear and evident to us:

(a) First of all GATT must demonstrate, at this juncture, that it has understood the need to assign increasing importance to the problems of the less-developed countries and actively to seek solutions which might assist their rapid development. This realization on its part necessarily implies a reform which the European Economic Community considers as being of great importance.

(b) GATT must also show that it has already traced the broad outlines which could constitute the basis for such a reform, and at this stage the CONTRACTING PARTIES must translate that outline onto the practical level in the form of rules which could be embodied in the text of the General Agreement.

(c) Lastly, GATT must take all necessary measures so that those rules can be made effective as soon as the requisite political decisions have been taken.

While we are thus in entire agreement on the need to undertake the task of drafting now, it seems to us, nevertheless, that any final choice between the main alternatives at present open to us would be premature.
First of all, it seems to us that if we wish to augment the effectiveness of GATT by better adapting its provisions to present-day needs, we must take account not only of the ideas and proposals put forward by various contracting parties, but also of those which will undoubtedly emerge in the near future in other forums. In this connexion it has not escaped our attention that certain delegations here have pointed out that the proposals which they have presented to us in no way prejudge the attitude which they will adopt at the world conference.

It is in line with a similar reasoning that the EEC believes that it would not be wise to make any commitment now.

We already have the report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference, and this text which will of course not be the only one submitted to the sagacity of our Ministers, gives us sufficient indication that there can be no question for the time being of hedging ourselves in with rules which we will inevitably have to review at a later stage.

I know, and other representatives here have recalled this, that less than a year ago statements were made here regarding the policy which the Community countries intend to follow in regard to the less-developed countries.

The truth is, however, that we now find ourselves between two ministerial conferences - one which took place in GATT in May 1963, and the other which will open in a few weeks' time under United Nations auspices. In these circumstances it seems to us difficult, meeting here in this Committee, to go beyond the intentions expressed by our Ministers.

I think it may be useful to recall in this connexion that, at that meeting, the Ministers of both the less-developed countries and the European Economic Community indicated - and here I quote the text of the conclusions adopted on 21 May 1963 - that action aimed at revising the General Agreement should not prejudice, but contribute to, broader negotiations in which contracting parties might participate, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.