GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

Committee on Trade in Industrial Products
Group 4 - Licensing

AUTOMATIC IMPORT LICENSING

1. Automatic import licensing is defined as licensing which is not used to administer import restrictions and which is not employed pursuant to the relevant provisions of the General Agreement inter alia Articles XI, XII, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX and XXI, and when foreign exchange is granted automatically. The term "automatic licensing" covers technical visa requirements, surveillance systems, exchange formalities related to imports, and other administrative reviews of an equivalent kind effected as a prior condition for entry of imports.

2. Alternative I

Automatic licensing systems, where required, shall not be used to restrict imports. Such systems shall be governed by the provisions of the General Agreement, in particular Article VIII, and be subject to the provisions set out in paragraphs 3-9 below.

Alternative II

No automatic licensing shall be required for the importation of goods after ...... However, during the interim period, in special cases justified by the need to carry out certain administrative controls which could not be made in a more appropriate way, a system of automatic licensing may be applied subject to the following provisions.

3. The rules governing presentation of applications for automatic licences and the lists of products subject to automatic licensing shall be published, with a specific indication as to the character of the system, in such a manner as to enable governments
and traders to become acquainted with them. Any changes in either the rules governing automatic licensing or the lists of products subject to automatic licensing shall also be promptly published in the same manner.

4.A. Automatic licensing systems shall be applied without discrimination as to sources of imports.

4.B. All persons, firms and institutions which fulfil the legal requirements for engaging in import operations subject to automatic licensing shall be equally eligible to apply for and to obtain licences.

5. Application forms shall be as simple as possible. No document shall be required on application other than a pro forma invoice or, where strictly indispensable, other documents necessary to determine the nature and composition of the product.

6. No application shall be refused for minor errors in documentation easily rectifiable.

7. The applicant shall have to approach only one administrative organ for a licence.

8. Applications for licences may be submitted at any time.

9. Applications for licences shall be granted immediately on receipt or if not administratively feasible within a maximum of five working days from the date of receipt of the application.