We have just heard very informative statements by the Ambassadors of Austria and Argentina, and I am sure they will help us in our deliberations. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the very useful and very constructive work of His Excellency the Ambassador of Brazil in his capacity as Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

In our opinion, it is not questionable that we are starting a debate on an important matter that will be present for a long time on the agenda of international trade and co-operation and, therefore, in the GATT too. This cannot be contested. Environment has always been discussed as an important political matter, economic issue, from the point of view of social development, enhancement of science and technology, from the point of view of human rights, of the development of developing countries, of modernization of the industry of developed countries, of international co-operation, of the survival of mankind, from the point of view of health, what kind of water we drink, what kind of air we breathe, and so forth. All these and other questions are being widely discussed in the relevant national and international bodies. At this point in time, it is important to secure participation in the preparations for the UNCED 1992 and to contribute to this most important undertaking on matters of environment and development.

There is no reason why GATT should not take part in these international endeavours. It is true that environment is not GATT's main task nor primary preoccupation. But, on the other hand, it would be wrong for it to stay apart. In the final analysis, the level of GATT's involvement on environment and development matters shall depend entirely on us, the members of the Council.

There is no doubt that further environmental degradation has to be prevented, halted, and it is obvious that this will not be done by itself. We all agree that it is necessary to undertake a conscious action on the national and international level so that practical, concrete results can be achieved. Since it is very clear that this issue will be present in our work for some time in the future, in our opinion it is necessary that,
the very beginning, we, that is, the Council of representatives of GATT, agree:

1. on what our common aim is - what it is that we would like to achieve through our deliberations, negotiations and agreements, fully aware of the complexity of international and national environmental measures and their relations and impact on the promotion of international trade;

2. to establish how things stand now and to identify all that has been done up to now on the national and international level. We find the note by H.E. the Ambassador of Brazil, in his capacity of Chairman of the GATT contracting parties, contained in Spec(91)21 very useful and indeed very instructive, and can serve as a starting point for defining these main tasks.

On the basis of our deliberations so far and on the basis of our own analyses we would like to propose to the Council to adopt the following conclusions:

1. To decide to invite the GATT contracting parties to submit to the Director-General, as soon as possible, structural information, in the form of answers to a questionnaire, on national environmental measures, with comments, if any.

2. To invite international organizations to provide information on environmental measures undertaken within their scope of activity, with comments, if any.

3. To request the Director-General to undertake a study on the line suggested by H.E. the Ambassador of Brazil in his note. Once the secretariat has received information from the majority of the contracting parties and from the international organizations it should expeditiously prepare an informative and analytical study on environmental measures and trade. We propose that once the study has been prepared we meet on the level of GATT Council representatives to review it and to agree, through negotiations, on the necessary steps to be undertaken. It would be useful if we could do this during autumn.

GATT should not deal with the adoption of norms and standards of environmental policies and measures but should deal with their respective trade aspects, the point of departure being the need to prevent the use of environmental measures as disguised trade barriers and contrary to GATT's main objectives.

Many of the provisions of the General Agreement and other instruments are relevant to environmental measures. Nevertheless, before a detailed analysis of GATT articles and other GATT instruments has been completed it cannot, in our opinion, be said beforehand whether they are adequate and sufficient for the present day and even less so for the future.

It is clear that we have to approach the matter in an analytical and organized manner and from that point of view the suggestion for
establishing a working group should be given positive consideration and it is advisable for us to reach a clear consensus. If I may add, our main concern - preoccupation should not be, in our opinion, the establishment of the working group, but rather its mandate. So if we are going to establish it we should concentrate on its mandate bearing in mind the GATT main obligations.

As far as Yugoslavia is concerned, our expectation is, as I mentioned earlier, that GATT will deal with this matter for a longer time. The Federal Government of Yugoslavia has already founded a special group on the federal level with the mandate to prepare, as soon as possible, an inventory of national environmental measures and international conventions to which Yugoslavia is a signatory as well as to give a general overview of the matter from the point of view of Yugoslavia's foreign economic and trade relations.

In the end, I would like, once again, to underline that we should be aware that here we are dealing with a very important and most sensitive matter and that it is indispensable that the degradation of environment should be stopped, prevented, but not to the detriment of another, that is, to the profit of some and on the account of others, not by negatively influencing the development of developing countries, but in such a way that all members of the international community may profit. If we accept the principle of respect for interdependence and the principle of common interests, the action initiated by Austria, on behalf of the EFTA countries, shall be useful and successful.