We believe that in the context of this structured debate on environmental measures and trade, we should seek to reconcile ecological, trade and development objectives. The incompatibilities between trade, the environment and development must be eliminated.

The fundamental question is to decide whether we wish to enhance the human dimension of trade, that is, preserve the environment, protect prosperity and encourage harmonious development; or whether we prefer to maintain trade that has side-effects which are harmful to man, the environment and national development.

We should immediately raise the question of GATT's contribution to the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference on Environment and Development. GATT cannot remain indifferent to the consequences of trade for the environment. GATT must participate actively in the preparation of an instrument to limit the damage that trade so often inflicts on the environment.

GATT's contribution must take account of the fact that the economies of developing countries pose less of a threat to the environment. In view of our different levels of economic development, the document that will result from our discussions must begin by drawing a distinction between the major polluters of the industrialized world and the developing countries. As a matter of urgency, the problems of developing countries must be identified and practical measures proposed to assist those countries with their programmes of action for environmental protection.

For it is necessary to ensure that the short-comings in the legislation of developing countries, their lack of technology and management personnel are not exploited in order to inundate our markets with dangerous products and technologies that destroy the natural harmony of the environment.

The working group to be set up must endeavour to identify trade practices that contribute to upsetting the ecological balance. It must also identify measures taken to protect the environment and examine them.
from the point of view purely of trade. Measures taken on environmental grounds must not become a covert form of protectionism. The working group will also have to deal with questions such as:

- What measures should be taken to halt the expansion of trade practices that are harmful to the environment?

- Will the required rules be the same for industrialized countries and developing countries?

- What form of co-operation should there be between GATT and the other international bodies dealing with environmental protection in order to protect international trade?

- With regard to rules, transparency and non-discrimination, how should our work be conducted so as to avoid an approach that cannot guarantee the establishment of an effective surveillance mechanism?

- What will be the approach to national legislation? Is harmonization desirable or necessary?

All these questions require clear answers from the working group. It is important that the GATT contracting parties revitalize the activities of the working group by updating its terms of reference. No efforts must be spared in ensuring that GATT participates actively and constructively in a debate that concerns the whole planet and to which our organization cannot remain indifferent. GATT will have to ensure that trade rules contribute to preserving the environment. For trade which promotes selfish interests to the detriment of the environment and harmonious national development places the future of mankind in jeopardy.

Our endeavours must be directed towards making accountable and penalizing those who destroy the environment. It is not enough to identify practices that are detrimental to the protection and preservation of the environment. Above all, effective instruments must be found that will enable us, in the area of international trade, to respect and preserve the ecological balance.

We cannot close our eyes to the fact that unbridled economic growth inevitably leads to over-exploitation of natural resources, thereby endangering, human life, destroying social and economic structures and, in some respects, disregarding the most fundamental moral and ethical principles.

Would it not be better for GATT to begin immediately to reflect on the issue so that we will be in a position to make a real contribution at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development?