First, we wish to express our appreciation to Ambassador Ricupero for his work.

The delegation of Bolivia associates itself with the countries that, quite rightly, have expressed their concerns before this body about the implications for developing countries of the examination and treatment of trade and environment issues within GATT.

The reason for our concern is that, without adequate preparation and analysis, the issue could have complex and problematic repercussions and implications.

The Latin American countries, both individually and collectively, have been alive to environmental problems. Acting individually, Bolivia has decreed an ecological moratorium and has submitted a draft legislation on environmental protection to the National Congress. Collectively, we are involved in studies and other preparations for the Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro in July 1992. In addition, as has already been said in this assembly, the meeting on "Environment and Development" held in Tlatelolco in March this year, underlined clearly the factors which, despite all endeavours, limit the economic and social possibilities of the region and contribute to increasing the number of people under the poverty threshold, which naturally affects the health of the environment.

Consequently, we consider that environment issues are an integral part of the development process and cannot be addressed separately. A healthy international economic climate is therefore essential if development is to be environmentally sustainable.

It is important that developing countries receive assurances that their already difficult situation will not be worsened by the repercussions on trade that could result from the introduction of measures that would further weaken their economies. It should also be asked whether this is the right way to save the environment.

We therefore consider that the issue calls for a positive approach and progressive attitudes. We should examine options that strengthen our
economies rather than weakening them further. Protection of the environment cannot be divorced from a nation's economic needs and should take due account of our peoples' aspirations to attain better and alternative standards of living. To sum up with a pertinent quotation: "when the basic necessities of life and the environment compete, in the end, the environment is generally the loser".