Faithful to its mission, the International Chamber of Commerce has always lent its support to any initiative aimed at promoting international trade. As early as November 1962, the ICC therefore called upon governments to take advantage of the occasion provided by the enactment of the Trade Expansion Act by the United States Congress to open new trade negotiations within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

In July 1963, the ICC welcomed the decisions taken by the GATT Ministerial Meeting and defined the principles and methods of negotiation which, in its opinion, would enable the Geneva Conference to achieve positive results of universal significance.

Since then, the ICC has continuously concerned itself with the problems which have arisen in the course of the negotiations, drawing the attention of governments to steps which, it seems, should enable the difficulties encountered to be overcome. It has brought to bear the influence of its national committees with the aim of overcoming resistance and reacting against the pessimism that has sometimes pervaded the negotiations. The ICC is happy to observe that this action has achieved results and that tangible progress has been made in recent weeks.

Now, however, when the Geneva Conference has entered its ultimate and decisive phase, the ICC wishes to emphasize once again how crucial the success of this enterprise appears to the world of business which it represents. What is at stake is so far-reaching that a failure of the Geneva Conference - or even a success too limited in character - would be looked upon as a serious defeat for the spirit of international co-operation. Protectionism would thus be strengthened and, in particular, there would be the danger of seeing its influence spread to the level of the major regional economic groups.
The ICC therefore addresses an urgent appeal to all those in whose hands lies the fate of the Geneva Conference. Every country that takes part in the Kennedy Round owes it to itself to make the largest possible contribution to the common effort. Instead of concentrating on theoretical issues or narrow considerations of strict reciprocity, negotiators from all of these countries should, above all, manifest their confidence in the dynamism of a genuine liberation of trade, which would open the way for healthy competition between producers, for a better distribution of human and financial resources and for a more rational international division of labour between different parts of the world. The ICC is convinced that if the negotiations are carried on in this spirit, the Geneva Conference will be a new milestone on the road of post-war trade expansion. It will give a strong stimulus to trade throughout the world, wipe out the misunderstandings that have arisen between the various groups of nations - industrial and developing countries alike - and make it possible to lay the foundations for confident and constructive co-operation between peoples of all continents at all levels of economic development.