Like previous speakers I strongly feel the impulse to pay tribute to what the GATT organization and its able leader, Eric Wyndham White, have achieved over the last twenty years. I shall, however, have the opportunity to do that tonight at some length.

At this juncture the main topic of my brief comments will be the future work programme of our organization. In the light of the results of the Kennedy Round - although they are unevenly distributed - GATT stands out as one of the most successful international organizations in the world. The very excellence of GATT's past achievements seems to give raise to the question whether we cannot afford, for some time at least, to rest on our laurels; the temptation is all the greater as for some of us this very particular kind of laurels have grown some thorns. The results of the Kennedy Round, it is said, require time to be digested by the economies.

It is understandable that few of us, therefore, would be so bold as to commit ourselves right here and now to embark on a further major negotiation. But just as few, I am sure, would be prepared to say that our objective can be considered as fulfilled, that world-wide trade liberalization has gone as far as will ever be conceivable. If these two assumptions are true, it should be possible to agree on how our organization can keep the necessary momentum to remain in the future the useful instrument it has been in the past. It is of greatest importance that at the historic cross-roads where we find ourselves, we should reaffirm our objectives and indicate explicitly that we have not lost interest in our aims. The question is how we can best express this determination.

Our distinguished Director-General in his programmatic statement of 10 November, which I have read with great interest, has given us his ideas on the matter. I cannot agree with each detail of his suggestions but I would be
willing to endorse whole-heartedly this programme because it is based on the realistic assumption that a thorough preparation is needed before we can again sit down at the negotiating table. Since experience has shown that it takes years of studies before we can formulate new negotiating concepts, we must start now. The types of studies which are suggested are certainly worthwhile.

Besides the factor of time, of psychological climate and the need of GATT to live up to its international reputation there are other weighty arguments why we should not relent in our efforts: regional co-operation and integration have proved very successful and will undoubtedly progress.

In Europe, for instance, efforts continue to strengthen the economic groupings and to overcome the economic division which still exists. The larger and the more prosperous an integrated European market will be, the greater its responsibility as a partner in world trade; on the other hand, the longer the present split continues, the more persistent the need not to relent the efforts at world-wide trade liberalization. Regional integration and liberalization of world trade should not be alternative but parallel objectives. They can and must stimulate each other.

Turning now to the field of agricultural trade, the same option in favour of a forward look should be made. Maybe it is not quite appropriate to put the main stress here on the word "liberalization", but rather on notions like "organization" and "negotiation", both of them looking for more orderly conditions to be established in importing as well as exporting agricultural commodities. In the realm of economic activity, there is really nothing more fundamental - in the true sense of the word - than agricultural production. For this very reason, it does not seem possible to us simply to apply the same rules and pursue the same objectives as in industrial trade. The claim of our friends in the agricultural exporting countries to secure access to their markets, under conditions of stability and at remunerative prices, is surely legitimate. But the point of view of the importers, that is to say a rather large number of industrial countries with a residual agricultural production, to maintain this branch of their economy for reasons which are not only economical, but sociological and political, seems equally justified. A just balance will have to be struck between these two main considerations. I feel that we shall never achieve this objective through just more freedom for imports, important as it is. Any such move must be matched by imposing, at the same time, a considerable measure of discipline, taking the shape of concrete commitments both with respect to prices and trade volumes. But, however this may be, Switzerland is surely ready to co-operate in finding appropriate and mutually satisfactory solutions.

Finally, the great task awaits us to make further progress in helping the developing countries in their efforts to export more and to gain more for what they are exporting. This aim can only be reached by intense co-operation
between developed and developing countries as well as between the numerous
organizations active in this field. Apart from co-operation I would also
plead for mutual confidence and objectivity. In saying this I am sure that
I am not betraying but merely echoing the spirit which permeated the opening
statement made by our distinguished Chairman Mr. K. B. Lall of India on
9 November. I fully understand that our friends in the developing world
sometimes feel embittered and frustrated about the slowness of progress
and the apparent reluctance on the part of the highly developed countries to
go the whole way in meeting the objectives set by the developing countries.
The needs admittedly are urgent and do not allow for delay. I honestly feel,
however, that this fact is universally recognized, that progress has been made
which deserves some recognition and that further advances are slow not because
the political will to help is insufficient but because of the inherent
difficulty of changing the pattern of economic behaviour.

This being said, I readily agree that under the heading of co-operation
which I so warmly recommended, concerted action is required. The necessary
machinery exists in both GATT and UNCTAD, to name only the two principal
international organizations in this area of trade. The next step must be
taken at the New Delhi Conference within the framework of UNCTAD, which is
the organization with the overall responsibility for elaborating a coherent
policy of development. GATT as a proved forum for trade negotiations should,
however, stand prepared to assist with the implementation of UNCTAD programmes
in the trading field. GATT, in close collaboration with UNCTAD should take
stock of all the elements of the situation, establish a certain number of
priorities and then move ahead beyond what has been done in the Kennedy Round.
The results of this negotiation, I think, were not negligible by any means, but
should provide a good starting point for a new initiative.

I shall not elaborate here in any way on the practical means to achieve
this end. I am with the Director-General when he feels that, for organizational
reasons, the problem of preferences, for instance, is better discussed at the
New Delhi meeting first. But what I would like to stress here is that, whatever
decisions are finally taken, the question of practical implementation is of
paramount significance. It is not enough to create a framework of general
resolutions; this framework must be filled with practical, highly individualized
efforts on the part of all concerned. Let me just mention as a happy augury that
agreement in principle seems to exist on making the GATT Trade Centre a joint
venture of GATT and UNCTAD. The activity of the Centre should help our friends
in the developing countries to reap a practical advantage from general trade
liberalization measures which we have already negotiated and are, we hope,
going to negotiate in the future.

I have already been too long, Mr. Chairman. May I then be permitted, in
concluding, simply to express the hope that the GATT will, in the various fields
of its manifold activity, go on displaying the same energy and sense of purpose
it has shown during its distinguished career so far. Switzerland's continued
and firm support will certainly not be missing.