GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

Multilateral Trade Negotiations
Group "Tariffs"

STATEMENT MADE BY THE DELEGATION OF ARGENTINA
AT THE GROUP "TARIFFS" MEETING, MARCH 1976

In connexion with the special procedures for the developing countries in this area of the negotiations, and with particular reference to the urgency of defining measures or actions which, parallel with or as part of the plan for tariff cuts by the developed countries, would assure them of special and differential treatment, it is of particular interest to analyze at this meeting both the proposal made yesterday by the European Communities and the proposals, comments or suggestions which have been heard previously in this negotiating Group, especially those made yesterday by the delegations of the United States, Sweden and Canada.

In the first place we should bear in mind the need to adopt, at least in principle, a set of procedures, measures or actions designed to translate into reality, in the tariff area, the principles in favour of developing countries set forth in the Tokyo Declaration, whether as regards the reduction on a preferential basis or on the basis of most-favoured-nation treatment of tariffs affecting products or sectors of special interest to those countries or as regards the protection of preferential margins that might be eroded by a general tariff reduction on the part of developed countries which are applying schemes of preferences under the GSP.

The statistical and technical work that may be carried out by the secretariat of GATT in support of the information requirements of the developing countries will always be of great interest, but in order that it may adequately answer those requirements it will have to be oriented towards the desired objective. We would like to give a few examples to prove that identification of the export interest of developing countries in the matter of tariff cuts is directly related to the type of action or measure taken in their favour:

(a) If it should be decided to grant on an MFN basis advance implementation, larger reductions or the elimination of exceptions lists in respect of products exported by developing countries, their interest would have to correspond to a competitive position in the international market, which presupposes the existence of a major trade flow.
(b) If the tariff cut or the advance implementation should be carried out on a preferential basis the developing countries themselves would have to indicate their interest, either on the basis of pre-existing trade figures or of an export potential that might be marketed with the help of the preferential margins and/or a concurrent decision to eliminate certain non-tariff barriers.

(c) If the intention is to safeguard preferential margins, the existing trade flows would have only a relative value, in some cases owing to the lack of sufficiently up-to-date figures and in other cases owing to the short period during which the preferential schemes have been in operation.

(d) The foregoing shows that, together with the information that might be provided by the secretariat of GATT, requesting as appropriate the help of the developed importing countries, it would be desirable in the majority of cases that the developing countries concerned should submit notifications addressed to all the developed countries, through the GATT secretariat, concerning their special interest in particular products and in connexion with or independently of specific measures. This does not mean that the developing countries should not, if they consider it appropriate, refer in their communications to some developed importing countries in which they have a special interest, or even perhaps propose bilateral, unilateral or multilateral consultations.