OBSERVER STATUS FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN THE TOKYO ROUND

Note by the Secretariat

The following information on the manner in which the question of observer status for international organizations was dealt with in the Tokyo Round is circulated by the secretariat in accordance with the request of the Group of Negotiations on Goods.

1. Although a number of international organizations attended various meetings of the bodies established to conduct the Tokyo Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, no decision was taken to accord formal observer status to any organization.

2. It was however decided at the Tokyo Ministerial Meeting in September 1973 that "the Trade Negotiations Committee could decide to invite the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to attend its meetings, as appropriate" (document MIN(73)SR). In pursuance of this decision, the Trade Negotiations Committee invited the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to attend its session in July 1974. UNCTAD also attended meetings of the Trade Negotiations Committee from July 1975 onwards, being shown in the Lists of Representatives as "Observer from Inter-Governmental Organizations". In the Committee's subsidiary bodies, UNCTAD was regularly invited at the beginning of meetings to attend as an observer. The International Monetary Fund also attended meetings of the Trade Negotiations Committee, and some of its subsidiary bodies, on an ad hoc basis.

3. Certain specialized organizations attended meetings of some of the Sub-Groups established under the TNC. The Customs Cooperation Council was invited regularly by the Sub-Group "Customs Matters" to be represented by an "observer to assist the Sub-Group in an expert capacity". The International Organization for Standardization and the International Electrotechnical Commission were regularly invited to attend meetings of the Sub-Group "Technical Barriers to Trade". The Chairman of the ECE Group of Experts on Data Requirements and Documentation was invited to one meeting of the Sub-Group "Customs Matters".

4. No formal decision was taken in the Tokyo Round regarding speaking rights for observer international organizations in the meetings which they attended. However, representatives of international organizations were on occasions requested to provide information or technical expertise during discussions in particular negotiating groups. They did not participate in decisions.