AGRICULTURE

Note by the Secretariat

1. This note is issued under the responsibility of the secretariat and is intended to facilitate further discussion in the Preparatory Committee. It seeks to identify, in the light of the discussions recorded in PREP.COM(86)SR/2 and earlier discussions, the main considerations which would appear to be relevant should the Committee decide to formulate recommendations on agriculture. This note is not intended to be a summary of the discussions. It in no way prejudices the views that delegations may have as to whether and how issues relating to agriculture might figure in the Preparatory Committee's recommendations to Ministers.

Main points emerging from the discussion

2. Achieving greater liberalization for trade in agriculture, bringing agriculture more fully into the multilateral trading system and measures affecting trade in agriculture under strengthened and more operationally effective GATT rules and disciplines, are among the broader negotiating objectives elicited in the course of the discussion. The need for a balance of rights and obligations under the GATT, the special needs of the developing countries and specific characteristics and problems in agriculture are referred to as factors to be taken into account in negotiations.

3. Specific goals outlined embrace: improved and more secure terms of access to markets; greater discipline on subsidies affecting trade, especially export subsidies and other forms of export assistance; more clearly defined limits under GATT rules to the impact of domestic agricultural support policies on international trade; better disciplines concerning sanitary and other technical barriers to trade; improved transparency; and more effective implementation of the GATT provisions providing for differential and more favourable treatment for developing countries.

Points for further discussion

4. Can it be agreed that the Recommendations adopted by the CONTRACTING PARTIES in 1984 as a balanced framework for future action aimed at improving the rules and achieving greater liberalization for trade in agriculture provide an appropriate basis for a recommendation by the Preparatory Committee on agriculture?

5. Another question is how negotiations on agriculture aimed generally at improving the rules and achieving greater liberalization might be conducted.