1. At its forty-second session in November 1980, the Committee on Trade and Development reviewed the technical co-operation activities of the GATT secretariat. For that purpose, the Committee had before it document COM.TD/W/323 which described the main areas of work in the field of technical co-operation. The following paragraphs give a brief account of the activities of the secretariat in this respect since the forty-second session of the Committee.

Seminars and country missions

2. There has been continuing interest among developing countries in receiving GATT missions either for conducting seminars or for holding discussions on particular issues. In this connexion, it might be noted that since November 1980, GATT missions have visited some thirteen developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, at their request. The missions have co-operated in seminars organized by governments for their officials and participants from the public and private sectors. The seminars were aimed at providing an insight into problems and issues that are taken up in the GATT and that have an impact upon the trade policy of those countries, thus providing a greater understanding of the rules which govern international trade relations. The programme of seminars was tailored to the requirements and particular interests of each country and covered, inter alia, the basic principles and main provisions of the General Agreement, the rôle of GATT as an instrument for the settlement of disputes and as a forum for discussion and negotiations on trade, the special provisions in GATT concerning developing countries, the results of the Tokyo Round in the areas of tariffs and tropical products, non-tariff measures, the Codes and multilateral agreements negotiated in the Tokyo Round and the question of trade negotiations among developing countries. Procedures for and implications of accession to the GATT and/or the MTN agreements were covered in some seminars where countries expressed interest in such matters. The programme also provided an opportunity for an exchange of views on commercial policy issues and problems of particular interest to the developing country or group of countries participating in certain seminars.

3. For each seminar, the secretariat prepared detailed data and information on products of export interest to the country or countries concerned, giving trade flows, pre-MTN and post-MTN tariffs (m.f.n. and GSP) and other relevant particulars with respect to developed country markets. Summary tables giving an analytical
presentation of the data showing the total value of exports to each market, the value of dutiable exports and the value of dutiable exports benefiting from MTN concessions, separately for agricultural and industrial products, were also prepared by the secretariat for use in the seminars.

4. Officials of the secretariat have also undertaken special technical co-operation missions to certain developing countries. During these visits detailed discussions were held with government authorities, inter alia, on specific trade policy issues of relevance to the work of GATT, on implications of the provisions of certain Codes or other multilateral agreements for the trade of the country concerned and on the compatibility of its existing legislation or practices with the provisions of the General Agreement or the Codes.

5. The secretariat has been contributing to certain activities of the International Trade Centre by making available the services of its officials for participation in export development courses organized in Geneva or elsewhere for officials of developing countries. The secretariat input has been concerned with trade policy issues and the clarification of matters relevant to the work of GATT.

Assistance to least developed countries

6. Requests by least developed countries for technical assistance are given special attention by the secretariat. The secretariat has responded to requests by sending GATT missions to such countries, by providing data and information on the results of the MTN for least developed countries, or by making ad hoc studies on specific trade policy issues of interest to least developed countries.

7. A number of officials from least developed countries have also taken advantage of their visits to Geneva to discuss with the secretariat issues of interest to their countries.

Assistance in connexion with the Codes

8. Upon request, the secretariat has continued to provide developing country delegations with advice, information and explanations relating to the provisions and the operation of the Codes and other multilateral agreements. In addition, data, documentation or brief notes have been made available whenever possible at the request of developing countries in connexion with the deliberations of relevant committees or in the context of particular issues.

Assessment of tariff results of the MTN

9. Information and data on the tariff results of the MTN continue to be supplied to developing countries, upon request, although this demand has gradually declined since the previous report on technical assistance was presented to the Committee on Trade and Development.
Ad hoc requests

10. A number of ad hoc requests of developing countries were attended to by the secretariat during the period under review. These requests related, inter alia, to the preparation of loose-leaf schedules, renegotiation of schedules and studies on various products and sectors giving data on trade flows, tariffs, non-tariff measures and world prices. An important part of secretariat technical assistance activities is directed towards helping developing countries use effectively the mechanisms available in GATT to further their trade interests.

Briefing visiting officials

11. Briefing officials of developing countries visiting GATT Headquarters has continued during the period under review. Such briefings cover, in general, the latest development in the work of GATT or in the implementation of the Tokyo Round agreements. The secretariat has also arranged programmes to familiarize officials of developing countries on short study visits to GATT with different aspects of GATT activities, the work of the various GATT bodies, the implementation of MTN Codes and specific subjects of interest to their countries, permitting in-depth discussions on these matters.

Other

12. The secretariat has also endeavoured to keep in touch with delegations new to the GATT and with other interested delegations to inform them of relevant topical developments.

13. Delegations might wish to comment on the technical co-operation work of the secretariat and to suggest additional types of technical co-operation that might be useful in the period ahead.