The Working Party held a meeting on 16 December 1957 in order to discuss its work programme. It was recognized that, while the association of overseas territories raises various kinds of problems for the trade of contracting parties, the first stage of the work would have to be limited to the effects resulting from the exports from the associated territories to the Member States. It was agreed that this work should proceed in the following way.

1. The Working Party will meet in Geneva from 5 to 20 February 1958 to examine the following commodities: cocoa, coffee, tea, sugar, bananas, and tobacco, in that order.

2. A second meeting, from 26 February to 8 March, will deal with the following products: hard fibres (coir, sisal, jute, etc.), cotton, oilseeds and vegetable oils (groundnuts and oil, copra, coconut oil, palm kernels, palm oil), wood and timber (including plywood).

3. Members of the Working Party are invited to advise the secretariat by 15 January of any additional commodities they wish to have examined by the Working Party. The meeting of 5-20 February will then decide whether, and if so when, the Working Party will examine these additional items. However, it is suggested that contracting parties, before deciding to ask the Working Party to examine additional commodities which may be of interest to only one or two countries, might consult with the Interim Committee with a view to obtaining the desired information and thus avoid overburdening the programme of the Working Party. If contracting parties so wish, they might pass on information thus obtained to the secretariat for consideration by the Working Party in preparing its Report; it is understood that in such cases the Six might also submit their views to the Working Party.

4. The discussion on each product in the Working Party will proceed on the following lines:

(a) An examination of the factual position of each commodity under the Treaty, taking into account the import duties of the Six (the legal rates as well as the rates actually applied on 1 January 1957); the level of the common tariff and the rate at which that level will be reached by the Six; the rate at which tariffs will be reduced to zero for imports from the associated territories; the position with regard to fiscal duties and quota arrangements; and the position of the commodity under the agricultural provisions of the Treaty and Annex II.
(b) An analysis of the pattern of world trade, taking into account exports from the associated territories and from other suppliers to the Six, and the supplies available in those territories and elsewhere,

(c) A discussion of short-term effects of the provisions of the Treaty on patterns of trade and price levels, and also of the probable long-term effects, due account being taken of the production programme of individual countries and of foreseeable trends in world consumption.

5. The secretariat will prepare notes on each of the commodities selected for discussion and will endeavour to circulate them about ten days in advance of the meetings. Members of the Working Party and other contracting parties are asked to furnish to the secretariat, three weeks before the opening of the meeting at which the commodity will be examined, any factual material they wish to see included in the secretariat papers.

6. In addition to such data and in order to expedite the discussion, contracting parties may communicate their views on particular products in advance to the secretariat for circulation to Members of the Working Party.

7. The secretariat papers will also contain trade statistics on manufactures produced from the various primary products in those cases where the secretariat finds that imports of such manufactures by the countries of the Six are important. Members who have particular points to raise with regard to such manufactured goods are asked to communicate them to the secretariat for inclusion in its commodity notes.

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1 The Six informed the Working Party that they would wish to see included in the papers information on import duties in force in other important consuming countries. Accordingly, the secretariat will include such data insofar as available.