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1. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you on the topic of technical assistance for developing countries. The rôle of technical assistance has increased dramatically as developing countries get more and more involved with the GATT and the international trading system and as the links between trade policy and other aspects of their economic policies become closer.

2. The GATT Technical Co-operation Division was set up in 1980 in recognition of the useful rôle of technical assistance in the Tokyo Round and the desire of developing countries that it should be continued after the Round. The Ministerial meeting at Punta Del Este decided to strengthen GATT action in this area in particular, due to the diversity, the complexity and the novel character of the issues to be dealt with in the Uruguay Round. Now that we are midway through the process of negotiation, it seems to me timely and relevant to talk to you about the main focus of our activities and their further development.

3. In doing so, I should emphasize that if developing countries are to participate effectively in a negotiating process as complex and as wide-ranging as the Uruguay Round, their first requirement is for additional trained manpower, both in the capitals and in Geneva. I have repeatedly stressed that it is by strengthening their trade policy personnel in the headquarters and in missions in Geneva that developing countries can best ensure that they can vigorously pursue their interests and effectively handle the negotiating process. In addition, there would of course also be need for a number of developing countries to establish an adequate infrastructure for the management of trade policies and institutional mechanisms that would allow effective consultation and harmonization of views among the different agencies and interests affected by the negotiations in Geneva and involved in the process of decision-making.

4. We cannot of course, through technical co-operation, make up for this shortage of expertise in many countries. What we have been trying to do is to lighten the load of governments and delegations by providing data and information of barriers and trade flows, by furnishing background notes on issues in the negotiations, by briefing trade policy officials through seminars and workshops, both in Geneva and in developing country capitals, and by progressively strengthening our training courses in Geneva on the GATT and on multilateral trade policy issues.

5. With the Uruguay Round gathering momentum and gradually approaching the stage requiring governments to take policy decisions on the basis of which agreements can be reached, the demands for technical co-operation in certain areas have tended to increase. It is our intention to reinforce our activities in these areas. We will, for example, be making greater efforts to organize seminars and workshops in Geneva for officials belonging to a region or sub-region so that they can benefit from an in-depth discussion with GATT officials on Uruguay Round issues in a time-frame which is consistent with the dynamics of the negotiating process and which does not also take them away for too long from their normal activities at their headquarters or in Geneva. The secretariat will also step up the organization of training workshops or seminars for officials from particular groups of countries or regions in the capitals of these countries. Such seminars or workshops could be addressed to the full range of issues in the Uruguay Round, to a selection of these issues or even to an in-depth examination of a particular issue, such as, for example, trade in services, when the complexities of the subject require detailed treatment from the point of view of the participating countries.

6. I believe that the GATT secretariat should also concentrate on helping individual developing countries to organize themselves better to meet requirements of information, documentation, etc. which arise either in the context of GATT's regular activities or in the negotiating process in Geneva. One example that comes to my mind is the organization of data at the national level to meet the requirements of the GATT integrated data base. This, however, is assistance that cannot be limited to the time-frame of the Uruguay Round and it is perhaps assistance which requires supportive efforts by more than one institution.

7. Most of the activities already carried out by the secretariat and the additional activities that may be undertaken will continue to be financed under the regular budget of the GATT.

8. Quite evidently, however, there are limits to the financial resources available in the regular GATT budget for these activities. The capacity of the secretariat to deliver technical assistance to developing countries, in keeping with their increasing requirements, would need to be augmented with voluntary financial contributions from contracting parties. Such contributions have been received in the past, and have supported a significant part of the technical co-operation activities of the secretariat. I would content myself by expressing the hope that such voluntary contributions will be forthcoming on an even more generous scale than in the past. Perhaps contracting parties may wish to also consider the possibility of establishing a standing "trust fund" in the GATT for supporting the secretariat's technical assistance activities over the next two or three years.

9. We are fully aware of and appreciate the contributions being made by other international organizations, as well as some governments, to technical assistance in the context of trade policy in general, and the Uruguay Round in particular. We are convinced that there is more than enough scope for these contributions, to complement the efforts of the GATT

secretariat in this regard and, perhaps, to focus more particularly on areas and activities that are outside the scope of GATT's traditional rôle. I have already referred to the need for such efforts on one such area, the development and improvement in a number of developing countries of an institutional infrastructure to formulate and conduct trade policy.

10. I recognize, also, the importance of transparency in regard to technical assistance provided by various international organizations and governments. This is desirable even in normal circumstances. In the special conditions of the Uruguay Round Negotiations, transparency in the area of technical assistance is essential. The GATT has shared its experiences and views regarding technical assistance with international organizations and governments concerned. I would hope that the Committee on Trade and Development will continue to play a key rôle in this regard, as the focal point for the dissemination and sharing of information in regard to the technical co-operation activities of various international organizations related to the Uruguay Round.