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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATE OF SWEDEN
ON BEHALF OF THE NORDIC DELEGATIONS
AT THE MEETING ON 17 JANUARY 1967

Speaking on behalf of the four Nordic delegations, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden I want to make the following statement.

This session of the Committee on Trade and Development has a very special character since it is the first time that a GATT Committee is meeting in a developing country. Most of us left the winter of Geneva for the Uruguayan summer. We have done so not only for the sake of bright sunshine, but for the desirability of giving special emphasis to the important problems before us. We feel that the essential meaning of our long trip is to give us an opportunity to watch the operations of the GATT from new angles, far away from the day-to-day business in Geneva. We have been able to do so thanks to the hospitality extended by the Government of Uruguay. Our deliberations will take place in one of the countries, for which Part IV was specially created. This fact should add extra stimulus to our debate.

We are here to discuss the implementation of Part IV and to try to look into the future activities of the GATT with regard to developing countries. We realize that any kind of crystal-gazing is a difficult task. There are, however, quite a few things which can be said already today.

(a) The successful negotiations of Part IV, the willingness of the GATT Member countries to take into account the needs of the developing countries and to try to adapt the agreement accordingly.

(b) The principles underlying Part IV have made their impact felt in the course of the Kennedy Round negotiations. Substantial offers have been made, which are also of interest to developing countries. We must not indulge in unqualified optimism, but it seems reasonable to expect the negotiations to lead to fairly substantive results.

As you may know, Mr. Chairman, the four Nordic countries have joined their efforts to promote a successful outcome of the Kennedy Round. For the final stage of the negotiations they will act as a single delegation.

They realize that in order to make the Kennedy Round successful also for the developing countries the main responsibility lies with the developed countries. But these countries have to know which are the essential problems of the developing countries. In this respect it is necessary that the developing countries specify their requests. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that the Nordic countries will continue to give sympathetic consideration to such representations.

(c) We know that the GATT has been an effective and yet flexible means for achieving and supervising reductions of barriers of trade. We feel satisfied that the agreement will be a useful instrument for actions to the benefit of the developing countries also in the future. The problem related to trade and development will in the years to come continue to be subject to multi-lateral actions in the context of which the GATT has its logical place together with UNCTAD and other international organizations.

(d) All since the creation of Part IV, the Committee on Trade and Development has had an important function as to the implementation of its various provisions. As Mr. Wyndham White said in his very interesting statement yesterday afternoon we expect the Committee to pursue - consistently with the tradition in GATT - a practical approach to the problems before it.

The Nordic Governments have adhered to Part IV in the strong belief that trade and development can best be stimulated within the framework of liberal trade policy. In their notifications to the secretariat for the review of the implementation of Part IV, they have shown how these notions have materialized in their own trade policy. They furthermore consider the Kennedy Round as a useful means to realize their intentions.

I may recall that in 1965 the Nordic countries took an initiative regarding tropical products. The GATT Member countries were invited to consider their possibilities to reduce or eliminate trade barriers for tropical products without waiting for the final outcome of the Kennedy Round as such. In accordance with this initiative the Nordic countries have for their part recently abolished or reduced tariff duties on a range of tropical products such as bananas, spices, coffee and various cocoa products.

As to temperate foodstuffs the most important products belonging to this category are supposed to be covered by worldwide agreement; or arrangements now under consideration. The Nordic Governments attach great importance to the achievement of such agreements or arrangements and are prepared to assume such obligations which may be called for in this connexion.

The dismantling of trade barriers is extremely important. But the liberalization of trade will only bring limited benefits to the developing countries if it is not supplemented by practical and efficient measures in the field of export promotion. The Nordic Governments have from the beginning given their full support to the International Trade Centre. I think that by now we all agree that the Centre is performing very useful work. We find it desirable that the activities of the Centre be further extended and we will do our best in order to contribute to the success of its work.

These were some general observations that we wanted to make at the commencement of our meeting. Later on during our deliberations, we shall have an opportunity, no doubt, to revert to some of the points I have mentioned somewhat more in detail.