

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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## REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES AND FUTURE PROGRAMME

Statement by Mr. Mario Vetrone, Under-Secretary  
of State, Minister for Foreign Trade of Italy,  
on 23 November 1967

I should like to add some remarks to the statement made by Secretary of State Lahr on behalf of the governments which are members of the European Economic Community.

The fact that, only a few months after the end of the Kennedy Round, we are meeting here to discuss and prepare a programme for the future activities of the Contracting Parties is a clear proof that the countries of GATT are continuing to examine with undiminished zeal the possibilities which are offered to the Contracting Parties for the practical application of the objectives of the General Agreement.

Twenty years have gone by since 1947, when GATT was setting out along the road of the multilateral tariff negotiations which have made such an appreciable contribution to the progressive and substantial reduction of obstacles to international commercial exchanges.

Today we are rightly celebrating the great merit acquired by GATT during its twenty years of activity. My country takes some pride in asserting that during all these years it has not failed to join in the efforts of the other member countries to give a new stimulus to international trade.

The policy of an opening on the outside world which Italy, as a country with a high level of commercial development, has always followed throughout this period shows the spirit in which we have always taken part in the initiatives of GATT.

Many multilateral trade negotiations have taken place in these last few years with the participation of an increasing number of countries; together, within the framework of GATT we have done a lot of work, which has often been difficult and complex, to find solutions to our problems of commercial exchanges that will be acceptable to all of us. All this should remind us that the drawing up of a trade policy for our countries is no longer a purely national problem; it concerns the whole community of nations.

Very great progress has been achieved, it is true; but it is also true that, as regards world trade, there are still many problems outstanding.

We are convinced that the spirit of co-operation which has grown stronger in recent years within the framework of GATT - essentially through consultations and the new studies to be carried out in the various sectors of international trade will lead us towards the solution of any problems that might jeopardize the results so far obtained. Incidentally, this will allow us, when circumstances make it possible, to find new ways towards further progress.

Twenty years ago, our organization had twenty-three members; now it has seventy-six, and I am speaking solely of full members. Many developed countries have acceded to it, thus showing their trust and interest in the General Agreement as an effective and reliable instrument for the development of their trade with the industrialized countries.

The ever-increasing membership of developing countries creates new tasks or alters the nature that had originally been given to them by GATT. It is for the industrialized countries to make every effort so that in future - with the co-operation of the various developing countries - GATT may be, on the technical plane, the organization which may make an effective contribution to the serious problems arising in the development of their foreign trade.

Other countries which were outside our organization because of their economy based on centralized planning are now showing a greater interest in the initiatives and possibility of practical solutions offered by GATT. We are particularly gratified to see Poland amongst us as a full Member. The accession of Poland to GATT is, in our opinion, an eloquent proof that the possibility exists of still further extending the multilateral basis of the General Agreement thanks to the creation of a bridge between the market economies and the planned economies.

For the first time, Hungary and Bulgaria have sent observers to the session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES of GATT. This is another sign of the interest they take in the activities of GATT and shows their desire to give closer study to the possibilities offered by our organization for the solution of their trade problems.

We are persuaded that pragmatic considerations should continue to guide the CONTRACTING PARTIES in the examination of situations that might occur in future, to inaugurate within the framework of GATT a closer collaboration with the countries with centralized planning. For the moment, we express the hope that Hungary and Bulgaria, as they get to know the work and the problems of GATT, will gradually find in our organization the atmosphere and the conditions that will allow them to take more extensive action.

The important results that GATT has already achieved, as we all know, are largely due to its Director-General Mr. Wyndham White who, during these twenty years, by his tireless and intelligent work, has made GATT into a truly efficient instrument of economic co-operation.

May I end my remarks by expressing the hope that our work will enable us all to contribute to the preparation of a programme of work that will be practical and sufficiently elastic for the CONTRACTING PARTIES to achieve constructive and efficient results.