

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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

Statement by H.E. Mr. Georges Papadimitracopoulos,  
Minister of Commerce of Greece, on 24 November 1967

A happy combination of circumstances has brought me here today with the privilege of representing my country at these historic meetings of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the General Agreement, and I am glad to associate myself with the statements already made in commemoration of this twentieth anniversary of the creation of GATT.

In addition to my pleasure at being here among you, I have for my part a feeling of genuine satisfaction because Greece, whose economy mainly depends on trade, is proud to be among the most long-standing members of this international trade community, to have participated in its work with unflagging interest and to have contributed actively to the efforts made in order to eliminate one after the other the obstacles to the free development of trade - whether such obstacles take the form of tariff measures or of quantitative restrictions.

Since 1953 Greece has liberalized virtually all its imports, while other countries with a more robust economic structure were continuing to maintain quantitative restrictions on a wide range of products.

On this occasion, when we are invited to review and take stock of the work done, we gladly associate ourselves with earlier speakers who have pinpointed the achievements of GATT in these past two decades and the most recent among our successful endeavours, namely, the Kennedy Round.

We are happy and proud to recognize that thanks to the sacrifices made by all, in which Greece played a significant part, these negotiations have constituted a major step forward towards liberalization. We have, therefore, every reason to hope that a substantial increase in the volume of international trade will ensue.

You yourself, Mr. Chairman, have referred to the substantial increase that has occurred in the volume of international trade since 1953, and we are convinced that this trend, taken in conjunction with the economic development of all countries in the world, will in the coming decades bring a new surge forward, on a scale hitherto unknown.

Nevertheless, this upward trend which gives us so much cause for satisfaction today has been possible only because of the peaceful atmosphere that has prevailed generally - a factor that will certainly continue to be of the same importance in the future.

Considering the wide possibilities for solving the economic problems of our era, in a world in which the most far-distant points are being brought closer as a result of technological progress, we must recognize that our organization will be called upon to seek and to find solutions to a whole series of questions relating to the expansion of international trade among all the GATT Member countries, and more particularly those which from the economic point of view are the less wealthy or the less-developed.

The conclusion of the recent Kennedy Round marked a stage that we might term decisive in the development of international trade. It showed what practical possibilities our organization has for tackling successfully the complex problems connected with trade liberalization. This fact encourages us in our belief that the Kennedy Round will not have been the final culmination of the efforts of GATT. New initiatives must be taken with a view to the development of trade. If the Kennedy Round negotiations were a laborious process, the reason was that a common denominator had to be found for an approach to agreement. The next task should be to examine the practical effects of the implementation of that agreement on trade expansion, before launching any new endeavours. What I have in mind is the liberalization of trade in the field of non-tariff restrictions.

On the basis of the experience that we shall gain from results of the Kennedy Round, it will be possible to draw up programmes of action without running the same risks as in the past, because now we are more familiar with our mutual problems and better aware of our real interests in the long-term future rather than from the angle of immediate needs.

Accordingly, we share the opinion of those who believe that expansion of trade between highly-developed countries should have beneficial effects on the less-developed trading partners. It is our feeling that the positive elements required for a study of this problem can be assembled and can enable us to perceive the vast possibilities lying in that direction. The measures to be taken would be designed to ensure fuller liberalization so as to enable the less-developed countries to expand their exports and thus reduce their trade deficits and acquire the means of meeting their own development requirements.

Greece, which has not yet reached the stage of development that would have placed it among countries in the first category, is beset by constant trade disequilibrium. My country believes that it will be all the easier to establish liberalization measures that can remedy that situation if the friendly relations existing among the trading partners can be maintained.

We therefore wish to express our wholehearted support for the initiative taken by our eminent Director-General, Mr. Eric Wyndham White, in including in the agenda for this session the item entitled "Programme for Expansion of International Trade" and I should like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the ability, wisdom and inventive and fertile spirit of Mr. Wyndham White, who has guided our organization for the past twenty years and enabled it to achieve the objectives that it had set itself. At the same time, our appreciation goes also to the members of the GATT staff.