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REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES AND FUTURE PROGRAMME

Statement Delivered by Mr. J.P. O'Hagan on Behalf
of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations, on 24 November 1967

I have been instructed by the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization to make a statement on his behalf.

I would like first to inform you of the importance FAO attaches to your discussions, particularly regarding the setting up of an Agricultural Committee and the reactivating of the Special Group on Tropical Products.

FAO recognizes the negotiating rôle of GATT and the United Nations. It has consistently supported negotiations in such bodies, including the commodity negotiations in the Kennedy Round, with technical and economic advice and studies, both on agriculture generally and on individual commodities. The current FAO Conference has reconfirmed that FAO should play its full rôle in negotiations and consultations concerning agricultural commodities, in close co-operation with other bodies, such as GATT and UNCTAD. We thus intend to continue and expand this support.

My Director-General does, however, feel some concern regarding the terms of reference drafted for the new GATT Agricultural Committee. Because of their broad nature, he feels that if adequate care is not taken, some actual duplication may be introduced in the activities of GATT and FAO. He therefore hopes that care will be taken in the carrying out of the programme to avoid duplication. For the effectiveness of international efforts towards the solution of agricultural trade and production problems, the work of FAO and GATT should be complementary. This is feasible because agricultural problems have many aspects - technical, economic and commercial.

They must all be given adequate consideration when dealing with problems of agricultural development as well as when preparing for negotiations, and in the course of the actual negotiations themselves. Thus we urge that the achievement of this complementarity be kept consistently in mind in the development of the work of the suggested Agricultural Committee. As you know, Mr. Chairman, the two organizations worked closely together in the work of the Cereal, Dairy and Wheat Groups during the Kennedy Round, at the invitation of the Director-General of GATT.

The excellent relationship which exists between FAO and GATT provides a good basis at the secretariat level for ensuring that the resources of the two organizations are effectively utilized.