CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SEVENTEENTH SESSION

RELEASE ON DELIVERY

PRESS RELEASE NO.22
PRESS OFFICE
750 THIRD AVENUE
MUkon 6-5740

Statement by the
Canadian Representative
in the Second Committee
on December 8, 1962

The Assembly has before it this morning two amendments to the resolution proposed by the Second Committee in Document A/5316. I am sure that all delegations are aware that the first of these amendments is concerned with the time limits within which the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Trade and Development could be convened. The second amendment is concerned with one of the major topics to be taken into account by the Economic and Social Council and the Preparatory Committee in drawing up the conference agenda.

The delegations of Canada and Peru are proposing that operative paragraph 3.of the resolution recommended for adoption should be re-worded as follows:

"3. Recommends further to the Economic and Social Council to convene, after consideration of the preparatory work, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, as soon as possible after the thirty-sixth session of the Economic and Social Council (July 1963), but in no event later than early 1964, taking into account the view expressed by a large number of delegations that the Conference should be convened not later than September 1963, as well as the view of other delegations that the Conference be held in early 1964."

In addition, Mr. President, our two delegations are proposingg that operative paragraph 5(c) of the resolution should declare that one subject for inclusion on the agenda should be:

"(c) Measures leading to the gradual removal of tariff, non-tariff or other trade barriers, particularly by industrialized countries whether individually or collectively, which have an adverse effect on the exports of developing countries and hence on the expansion of international trade in general;".

.../2

Although these amendments are being submitted in the name of two delegations, they are the work of many hands. The text in document L408 was discussed and negotiated over several weeks with as representative a cross-section of the Assembly as was physically possible.

We are introducing these amendments for one purpose and one purpose only -- to secure the widest possible measure of support for the resolution in A/5316. This in our view is the most important resolution recommended by the Second Committee for approval by the General Assembly at the Seventeenth Session. We believe it would be most unfortunate if the United Nations were to take this major step forward in the field of international economic relations -- to convene a conference of the entire membership of the United Nations family to discuss the trade and development problems of the developing countries -- without the wholehearted support of all the nations represented here -- the major trading countries as well as the developing countries.

Mr. President, we are all realists here. The chances of reducing to manageable proportions the trade and development problems of the developing countries will be seriously diminished if this conference does not command the wholehearted support of all countries, and particularly of those best in a position to offer solutions to some of those problems.

We all know that in the debates and vote on this resolution in Committee, there were only two sections of the resolution on which no agreement could be reached. Given the unanimous agreement on the rest of this very comprehensive resolution, these points might seem minor indeed. Nonetheless, despite protracted attempts to produce compromise wording at the final stage of the Committee's debate, these two questions were considered sufficiently important for ten delegations to vote against the resolution as a whole, and for 23 more delegations to abstain.

Thus, despite unanimous expressions of support for the holding of the Conference, despite wholehearted agreement by all member states on by far the greatest part of the text before us, close to one-third of the membership of this Organization were not in a position to

support the enabling resolution in its final form. Included amongst these 33 member states, as indicated on page 13 of the report now before us, we find not only many of the major trading nations but also twelve who can be termed "developing countries" -- in whose very interest the conference is to be held. To my mind this comes close to being a tragedy. On a question of such importance, we should aim at nothing less than unanimity.

Perhaps it would be appropriate, at this stage, to refer to my own Delegation's position. In the vote on the resolution as a whole in Committee, Canada voted in favour. We made no secret of our unhappiness at the strict injunction to call the conference into session "not later than September 1963". We believed, and still believe, that the target is impossible to aim for with any certainty at this time. Conceivably, the Conference may be possible to convene by July 1963; if so, so much the better. But everything depends on the preparatory work. As nearly as we can estimate, and we are as fallible as anyone, relying only on past experience, the sort of conference we all want to see -- a working conference which will emerge with positive proposals for concrete solution to the problems of the developing countries -- will be more likely to take place in the very early part of 1964. The co-sponsors, in an important statement interpreting the text of their resolution, a statement which was included in our report, pointed out that the resolution simply made recommendations to ECOSOC. It would, they said, be up to ECOSOC alone to take the final decision on the date and scope of the conference. However, my Delegation for one does not wish to put ECOSOC in the uncomfortable position of going against a solemn recommendation of this Assembly, if that recommendation proves impossible to put into effect. These were, and are, the objections which my Delegation had to the text of operative paragraph 3 contained in the resolution recommended in document A/5316. Nonetheless, we voted for the resolution, because we shared the sense of urgency of the developing countries that a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should be held as soon as possible.

I should state in all candour that even if our two amendments should fail -- amendments to which we attach the greatest importance -- we shall still vote for the resolution. We shall do so, however, with a heavy heart and with much less conviction that the United Nations is launching itself on an initiative which will ultimately result, not only in success for the immediate objectives of the Conference, but in greatly strengthening this Organization, in which we have all placed our faith for the future.

I think there is no need, Mr. President, to deal at length with the text of the amendments now before us. This Assembly will recognize that there is no major difference between the paragraphs proposed by Canada and Peru, in Document A/L408, and the comparable paragraphs 3 and 5(c) in the text of the resolution recommended for adoption in Document A/5316. The difference is largely a difference in wording. The wording of these paragraphs in the text approved in Committee did not carry the full support of the member states represented here. I need only refer you to pages 10 to 13 of the report on Item 36 for the melancholy evidence that this is so. The wording now suggested for approval by Canada and Peru makes no departure from the substance of these paragraphs, but we hope -- and have reason to believe -- that it will command wide support. We believe, in short, that the changes in wording that we have proposed will enable 33 more countries to go on record as supporting the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

In conclusion I would appeal to my good friends and colleagues -- to the 35 co-sponsors of the original resolution who worked and are still working so hard to make a reality of their hope to convene a UN conference to discuss their problems of trade and development, and to all other delegations who have accepted the imperative need for this conference -- to support without change the amendments we have proposed.

These amendments, in the fullest sense of the word, represent compromises of divergent views. They lack a certain elegance of phrasing. Perhaps one of the things to be said in their favour

is that they do not fully reflect the views of any delegation or any member government. I believe, however, that they stand a good chance of commanding the support of this Assembly. These amendments have not been drafted in a vacuum and they have been submitted only after the closest consultation with a representative cross-section of delegations. These delegations have worked very patiently with us in the search for acceptable formulas.

These amendments are submitted with the single aim of reaching agreement on the real objective before us. This is the objective which underlay the debates on the majority of items dealt with by the Second Committee, of ensuring that the United Nations Conference has the fullest opportunity of finding solutions to the problems of trade and development of which we are all so starkly aware. I ask all delegations to keep this real objective in mind and after fullest reflection to support the two amendments now submitted. I believe that in giving this support they will be taking a decisive step towards a successful United Nations Conference.