

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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STATEMENT BY MR. C. VALENZUELA, CHAIRMAN OF
THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE
CLOSING MEETING

Now that the Eighth Session of the Committee on Trade and Development is coming to an end, I think I shall be interpreting the thoughts of all participants here if I say that the meeting has been a very positive one. We have had an opportunity to examine, in the light of Part IV of the General Agreement, certain aspects and trends of international trade, as well as the present status of the Kennedy Round in relation with the expectations of the developing countries. At the same time, we have had a constructive discussion on all the other topics in our agenda. The report of the drafting group which has been approved, sets forth the conclusions reached and summarizes the efforts made and the results attained.

On the specific matter of the decisions and recommendations approved by the Committee, I should like to refer to a field which in my opinion is of particular interest - namely, contacts with public opinion. I should like to thank the press, radio and other information media which have followed our work. It is always advisable - even in the field of technical activities - to keep public opinion informed and to receive from it the support of interest and enthusiasm. It may be that in certain circumstances there is justifiable impatience as regards the resolutions adopted by an international meeting. Having regard to such impatience which reflects the reaction of public opinion to the magnitude of the problems and the urgency with which they need to be solved, it is also necessary to take account of the fact that progress in international organizations is conditioned by the real possibilities of the participating countries to take action and enter into commitments and by the limits of their legal mandate. One cannot, therefore, expect dramatic decisions because, over a period of time, what we have already done and what we shall go on doing will undoubtedly have repercussions beneficial to the general interest.

With respect to the implementation of Part IV, including what can be achieved in the Kennedy Round, it has been possible to identify in detail the practical aspirations of the developing countries. In the coming months we shall have occasion to see to what extent this clarification at Punta del Este will improve the situation of the developing countries.

Turning to the future work of the Committee on Trade and Development, particularly after the end of the Kennedy Round, it has been agreed to convene a meeting of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to evaluate the results achieved.

Most delegations, in commenting on the major trade problems of the present time, have emphasized the influence of science and technique on the economic situation of developing countries as well as on possibilities for greater participation by those countries in international trade. I believe that in studying a future programme of action, the CONTRACTING PARTIES will have to face this scientific and technological problem which, in one way or another, constantly determines the evolution of international trade. I am convinced that this organization should concern itself with the scientific and technological factor as a matter of priority. The CONTRACTING PARTIES might perhaps consider, as a new measure for the benefit of developing countries, the creation of a committee similar to the Haberler Committee, whose report was the starting point for a serious effort to study the problems of economic development and of international trade. An exhaustive report on scientific and technological activities in the economic and trade sector, in the context of the new problems arising for developing countries, would be a major contribution by GATT within the spirit of Part IV.

In my capacity as Chairman of this Committee I should like once more to express my thanks to the Uruguayan Government for the hospitality which it has so kindly given us, and I should like to thank in particular H.E. Mr. Luis Vidal Zaglio, Minister of External Relations. We are also grateful to the Uruguayan authorities and officials in charge of organizing this meeting who have lost no opportunity to assist the work of the Committee and provide all facilities for delegates.

Our thanks go also to the international and regional institutions that have participated in this session, in particular the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Dr. Raul Prebisch, whose statement was a noteworthy contribution to our deliberations.

We should also like to thank the secretariat for its excellent technical co-operation, and in particular the Director-General, Mr. Wyndham White, and the Deputy Director-General, Mr. Gundelach, for the guidance they have given to our work. In his statement at the opening meeting, Mr. Wyndham White once more demonstrated his interest in the problems of developing countries and his desire that this institution should participate in the attainment of their legitimate aspirations.

I should like to express my warm thanks to the members of the Committee and to those who have attended as observers for the enthusiasm and devotion with which they have tried to strengthen the vitality of this Committee and for the support they have given me in carrying out my responsibilities as Chairman.