

**GENERAL AGREEMENT ON  
TARIFFS AND TRADE**

MIN(86)/ST/47  
18 September 1986  
Special Distribution

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Original: French

PORTUGAL: STATEMENT BY MR. LUIS FILIPE CALDEIRA DA SILVA,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN TRADE, AT THE MEETING OF THE  
GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL, 15-19 SEPTEMBER 1986,  
PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY

First, I should like to pay you my respects and say that, in addressing you and this assembly in my mother tongue, I am naturally proud to be able to point out that, of the languages spoken here, Portuguese was the first to be heard on this continent nearly 500 years ago, at the time of the great discoveries of the 16th century that carried our language round the world. It is on this continent that Portuguese took root, spread, and grew in importance to where it is now, the official language and mother tongue of over 120 million people, to whom I express here my feelings of fraternal friendship.

The Government of my country, and I personally, are very pleased that you have been chosen to chair this GATT Ministerial meeting.

Your appointment and the selection of Punta del Este as the site for this meeting of such importance to the future of the multilateral trading system, are proof that all of us are aware of the increasingly significant and constructive rôle played by Uruguay and all the developing countries in GATT.

I should also like to express my very sincere appreciation to the Uruguayan Government for its generous hospitality in hosting this meeting.

The representatives of the European Community have already presented in this plenary meeting the views of the Community on the content of the New Round of negotiations and the main issues to be resolved. Nevertheless, I should like to supplement what they have said by focusing on certain aspects of particular importance to my country.

1. Let me begin by stressing the efforts that my country has already made towards attainment of the main objective of the work we are undertaking today, namely the adoption of stronger disciplines to stop the tide of protectionism threatening the growth of international trade and even to cause it to recede. It is worth emphasizing that Portugal is now a member of the European Economic Community and its borders are more open than before, since it must now apply the trade policies of the Community of Twelve. My country has started a process of gradually reducing the tariffs

protecting its market and has undertaken to grant significant preferences to developing countries, in particular the signatories of the Lomé Convention, the countries of the Mediterranean basin, and the beneficiaries of the generalized system of preferences.

2. It is from this new perspective, and as a partner whose market is largely open to the exterior but who must also consider its own economic development, that Portugal views the coming negotiations as a means towards the establishment of a new and more just balance of concessions and advantages among all GATT members.

The fundamental elements of this new context will be a standstill commitment and rollback effort whose implementation should take account of each country's development level so as to establish trade relations on the basis of appropriately measured reciprocity.

We also consider it essential that the upcoming negotiations should result in the establishment of a new discipline which, if trade is lastingly to be expected to be genuinely more balanced and transparent, must prevent the use of unilateral and selective safeguard measures that give rise to unacceptable discrimination.

3. I should now like to dwell at somewhat greater length on a number of areas of economic activity that are particularly important in this vast exercise in liberalization, and to stress the sensitivity of certain sectors.

Trade in textiles and clothing is one area on which we think a realistic and carefully worded statement must now be made calling for a return to the normal GATT rules following a process of progressive liberalization that can only succeed to the extent permitted by conditions of the textiles and clothing industry.

Again, as regards trade in agricultural products, whose uniqueness must be acknowledged from the outset, we believe that any commitment to liberalization intended to help improve the balance of world supply and demand must have the support of all of the principal partners without, however, jeopardizing the internal and external mechanisms of the Common Agriculture Policy - mechanisms needed to make the structural adjustments required for the future of the Community of Twelve and for the development of some member States, including my own country.

Finally, I should like to mention a new topic among our objectives and one of great importance for the growth of the international economy, the sector of services, for which the planning of a process of liberalization will be a long-term undertaking. For the time being, liberalization of the services market cannot but be limited to a statement of general principles to serve as a basis for the initiation of a process of multi-stage negotiations that will make it possible to form a precise idea of all of the problems involved.

In addition, we believe that the framework required must:

- be differentiated according to the particular conditions of each sector, and
- be the legitimate expression of acceptable political objectives, taking account of the economic and institutional realities of each State.

In conclusion, I would stress that the complexity and diversity of the problems confronting international trade are such that they are solvable only at a multilateral level that drives from the international scene the spectre of bilateralism, which leaves us no chance of arriving at a fair and balanced distribution of international trade flows.

We are convinced that only a multilateral approach will enable us to reach the level of concertation necessary for placing world economic development in a context of progress that will make us capable of meeting the challenges of the next century.