

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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TURKEY: STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. ERCUMENT YAVUZALP, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE,
AT THE MEETING OF THE GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL,
15-19 SEPTEMBER 1986, PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY

May I first extend the sincere congratulations of my delegation to you on the occasion of your election to the Chair. We are confident that your outstanding qualities will be a valuable asset in contributing to the success of this meeting, no doubt the most difficult in the history of GATT.

I would also wish to express through you to the Government and the people of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay our thanks and appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us.

Like many other governments, our expectation from a New Round has been the achievement of a more credible trading system in which there would be a substantially greater trade liberalization in all sectors, thus leading to the expansion of world trade and better balance of rights and obligations. We also expected that through the New Round asymmetry in trade relations between developed and developing countries would be removed, non-discriminatory treatment in international trade would be achieved, world-wide structural adjustment would be promoted, protectionism would be reversed, conditions would be achieved in which enlargement of access of developing countries' exports to the markets of developed countries would be made possible and selective liberalization would be avoided. These were the expectations which led my Government to support the launching of the New Round.

A great deal of work has been carried out in the period preceding this meeting with the purpose of preparing a general framework in the form of a Ministerial Declaration for the New Round to be launched. The Preparatory Committee which undertook this work produced three documents which are now before us.

As was stated by our delegation in the Preparatory Committee, the document PREP.COM(86)W/47/Rev.2 constituted the best available basis for discussions, here, in Punta del Este, although it did not reflect our preferred positions on all issues. In other words, in accepting this document as a basis for discussions, we conceived it only as an instrument to help launch the New Round and not as a perfect framework for the new multilateral trade system.

We therefore hope and expect that this forum will produce for the New Round a more equitable and balanced deal covering the legitimate interests of all concerned, particularly those of developing countries. But an essential prerequisite for this is to avoid approaching the problem with short-term opportunism taking into account only individual interests. Although not so very desirable, it may, however, be a fact of life that some categories of countries, because of their big share in the world trade may influence the outcome despite objections by others. But an outcome shaped up this way rather than being based on an equitable and balanced compromise between the genuine interests of all concerned, will certainly not be helpful in building the required confidence in a multilateral trade system, which, in our view, is one of the main objectives of this exercise.

The framework, which, we hope, will emerge from this meeting for the New Round should form an integrated whole in which there should be a link between all its components, particularly between the preached objectives and principles and the actions recommended on specific issues. If actions to be recommended on specific issues would be hardly compatible with agreed principles and objectives, the result would be a crisis of credibility even at the very outset. For instance, there was almost no objection in the course of the preparatory work that the liberalization process should be conceived in a manner compatible with the objective of bringing about further liberalization and expansion of trade to the benefit of all countries, including the developing countries and that trade opportunity for the least-developed countries should be facilitated. And yet in the course of the same preparatory work the stand taken by most developed countries, for instance on textiles and agriculture, was hardly compatible with this agreed concept of liberalization. Even in the draft which has been supported by the largest number of countries as the basis of discussion in this forum, one can easily see the lack of relationship between agreed objectives and principles and many parts dealing with specific issues. Textiles and agriculture are outstanding examples among many others. It is difficult to conceive how the world trade can expand and structural adjustment for growth could be promoted within a system which will continue to deny to the developing countries the full benefits of their competitive capability in sectors where they enjoy comparative advantage. No new system will hold together unless it provides equitable and balanced gains to all concerned.

The work to be performed here should not be a kind of fight by individual countries to achieve a new system in which they will obtain the biggest share of benefits.

No sound and longlasting prosperity can be built upon the continuous poverty of others.

It would therefore be not only unfair but also unwise if we were to devise here a framework for a system in which the efforts of developing countries for economic growth through increased trade would be unfairly restricted. This is not a dictum of compassion but that of farsight and wisdom if we wanted a longlasting and credible new system in international trade. Constraints on world economic expansion would certainly continue unabated so long as existing obstacles against trade-oriented growth of developing countries were not removed. The continuation of asymmetry in trade relations between developed and developing countries, which is one of the main impediments for both the expansion of world trade and the economic growth of developing countries, cannot be eliminated unless the system to be devised allowed significant enlargement of access for exports of developing countries.

I tried to put as frankly as I can our general views on how we conceive the New Round, without going into technical details. I do hope and wish that the outcome of our deliberations here will, to the maximum extent possible, meet the legitimate expectations of all concerned in equity and justice. For, in our view, it is only in this way that we can build a sound, workable and comprehensive pattern for international trade for the years to come. As President Sanguinetti has said in his inspiring key-note address, success or failure of this meeting will not go unnoticed in history.