

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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BULGARIA: STATEMENT AT THE MEETING OF THE GATT CONTRACTING
PARTIES AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL, 15-19 SEPTEMBER 1986,
PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY

1. The Ministerial session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES meets at a time of profound structural changes in the world economy and rapidly growing interdependence between national economies. This deeply affects international trade and presents a new challenge to the international trading system and to international economic co-operation as a whole. Therefore the instruments regulating international trade and co-operation will have to undergo a process of renewal leading to a new level of multilateral co-operation among all countries. The New Round of MTN to be launched at this session should, in our view, enhance such an approach thus ensuring the finding of appropriate responses to the realities of today and to the challenges of tomorrow. We consider that these efforts should encompass all participants in international trade.
2. The interest of Bulgaria to take part in this Round of negotiations arises from the very nature of its open economy. Over one half of its national income is earned on the international market through exports. Bulgaria trades with over 100 countries including virtually all GATT contracting parties. It is a developing economy with a level of development similar to that of a number of developing countries which are contracting parties to the GATT. This level of development is duly recognized by the international community. For instance Bulgaria is a beneficiary of UNDP assistance and enjoys tariff preferences from nine industrialized countries under the GSP. At the same time Bulgaria grants tariff preferences to more than 100 developing countries.
3. Bulgaria's co-operation with GATT began in the late sixties. Since 1967 it has enjoyed observer status. Bulgaria took part in the MTN "Tokyo Round", has implemented the obligations it undertook in the tariff area and joined two sectoral arrangements. It also entered into negotiations for accession to the Standards Code. The latter negotiations in our opinion are still pending largely because of the problems that weaken the multilateral trading system itself.
4. The decision of the Bulgarian Government to apply for accession to the GATT which has been submitted for communication to all contracting parties corresponds to the character of its economy and economic policy. It is also based on the accumulated relevant experience within the GATT and on the expectation that as a result of the New Round of negotiations the

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multilateral trading system will become more adequate to the new phase the world economy is entering into. Bulgaria values the basic principles of the GATT - m.f.n. and non-discrimination and is convinced that on this sound basis positive results will be achieved in the MTN.

5. As a developing economy Bulgaria believes that becoming a contracting party to the General Agreement will broaden the possibilities for the country's participation in world trade as a means of accelerated economic development. Bulgaria is prepared to contribute to furthering the objectives of the General Agreement and assume the corresponding rights and obligations. We expect at the same time that our economy's actual level of development will be taken into consideration by the CONTRACTING PARTIES when the conditions of Bulgaria's participation in GATT activities are discussed. The economic and trade policy instruments being introduced at present within the context of the overall contemporary policy guidelines of the Bulgarian Government are in line with the basic GATT principles and objectives and thus will ensure the effective participation of Bulgaria as a contracting party. In this regard it should be noted that the rôle of tariffs as a key variable influencing purchasing decisions of importers has increased in importance. Bulgaria believes that its application for accession will be duly considered by all CONTRACTING PARTIES and expects early initiation of accession procedures under Article XXXIII of the GATT.

6. It is Bulgaria's intention to take the necessary steps to negotiate with the CONTRACTING PARTIES the terms of its accession to the General Agreement in the course of the New Round of multilateral trade negotiations.