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Statement by H.E. Mr. Georg Reisch
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

I believe this to be a fitting occasion to express my delegation's great appreciation for the time and effort that you, Mr. Chairman, are constantly spending in your capacity as Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES for the benefit of this organization. We are, indeed, very happy to work here under your able leadership.

If we think back for a moment to last year's Session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES here in Geneva and compare our intentions, hopes and plans for the forthcoming months with the results achieved since then, my delegation strongly believes that we can be very satisfied. The Ministerial Declaration adopted in Punta del Este is a great and historic step forward and proves the commitment of contracting parties to the open multilateral trading system and the ability of GATT to adapt to a changing world economy. It is now up to us to transform the Ministerial Declaration into action and to assure a successful outcome of the MTNs.

We set ourselves an ambitious time-frame for setting up the organization and structure of our negotiations. My delegation believes that it is in the interest of all contracting parties, developed and developing alike, to adhere to this timetable and to take all the necessary decisions with a view to allowing the substantive negotiations to start early in 1987. Only three weeks separate us from the date of 19 December 1986 by which time this task should be completed, and I appeal to all delegations to do their utmost to contribute to fulfil this commitment.

Full confidence among contracting parties is of paramount importance in this regard. The implementation of the standstill and rollback commitments of 20 September 1986 are an essential element in creating this confidence and the proper climate to continue our work both within the traditional fields of GATT as well as in the MTNs. An appropriate and independent mechanism allowing efficient and effective surveillance of the standstill and rollback commitments is therefore urgently needed. A delay would be in nobody's interest, and major trading countries as well as smaller ones have the responsibility to demonstrate the seriousness of their political commitment in this context.

Comparing the normal GATT work done in the past year with the programme contained in the 1986 Ministerial Declaration we see a link between the traditional GATT work and the MTNs. It is therefore

self-understood that the normal GATT work has to be continued. The outcome of this work could be useful for the negotiations in the different negotiating groups. I would like to mention in this context the work of the Committees and Councils overseeing the Tokyo Round Agreements and Arrangements as well as the different groups established by the 1982 Ministerial Declaration.

Protectionist pressures are mounting in various parts of the world and we have to react quickly to stem this tide. The spirit of Punta del Este, so often and rightly evoked, should guide us in fulfilling the clear mandate given by our Ministers in Punta del Este.