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ON TARIFFS AND TRADE**

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MEXICO

Statement by H.E. Mr. Alejandro de la Peña
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

The conclusion of the Uruguay Round in mid-December last year is encouraging for all our countries. Although in some areas we would have preferred more ambitious results, we did end up achieving the essential, namely concluding the negotiations with a comprehensive package of results. Our task, and responsibility, is to ensure that these results are spread throughout all the economic sectors of our countries, so as to solve the major problems facing the world economy, such as inadequate growth, unemployment and poverty.

In 1994 we will have to turn ourselves to giving final form to the results of the negotiations and working towards the rapid establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which we hope will take place in January next year. There are several delicate tasks before us between now and Marrakesh, particularly in connection with the Ministerial Decisions and Declarations. Prudence is the order of the day, our priority in Marrakesh is to ensure that the Round becomes a reality and that our hopes begin to be matched by concrete results.

The work of the future Interim Committee which will be responsible for the legal and administrative transition from GATT 1947 to the WTO is highly relevant and my country is ready to assist in any way it can. Of no less importance at this transitional stage is to deal coherently and responsibly with the situation of all those countries trying so hard to join GATT and hence become founding members of the WTO. They are quite right to entertain these hopes and in response we should allocate the time necessary in the working parties on accession.

We were certainly right in our choice of name for the future World Trade Organization (WTO) and I stress the word "world" in the title of our future institution. Last year we saw a veritable avalanche of requests from countries asking to associate themselves with GATT, some as observers and many more as contracting parties. By the time the WTO comes into effect, several of these future trading partners will have already been admitted and hence its coverage and composition will indeed be worldwide.

The WTO will face major challenges: firstly, to assist all member countries in "digesting" and implementing the wide-ranging results of the Round; secondly, to monitor whether the commitments undertaken are being fulfilled and if not, to act as a credible authority for rapidly settling trade disputes; and finally, to serve as the forum for concluding the negotiations agreed upon in the Uruguay Round's work programme and launching work on the topics decided upon in the framework of the WTO.

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For Mexico, last year was crucial from the point of view of its international trade. We are still making progress in our policy of liberalizing and diversifying our foreign trade and in general, in our attempts more fully to integrate our economy into the world economy to help deal with the demands of a young country which urgently needs to raise the standard of living of its population, particularly of those most in need.

We have concluded trade agreements at the subregional level in Latin America, with the Group of Three (Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela) and can report major progress in similar initiatives with the Central American countries and some Andean countries. Together with other trade partners we are involved in a serious and thorough review of our regional institutional framework (ALADI) to adapt it to current trends and requirements.

We have also finalized negotiations with the United States and Canada and as you know, the North American Free-Trade Agreement came into force on 1 January this year. At the end of November, we became a full member of APEC, a promising development in an important and dynamic region.

Before concluding, I would like to bid an admiring farewell to one of the most remarkable negotiators in the history of GATT, the Community Ambassador, Paul Tran. We would like to wish him every success in his new undertakings. Paul Tran has taught us all a great deal and shared with us his wisdom and friendship.