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KOREA

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Seung Ho
Ambassador, Permanent Representative**

The year 1993 will go down in history as an epoch-making year in international trade. What we collectively achieved last month, the long-awaited conclusion of the Uruguay Round, has renewed our optimism about the state of the multilateral trading system and the prospects for the world's continued economic growth.

The importance of the Uruguay Round agreement to the multilateral trading system, as well as its real and immediate benefit to the recession-stricken world economy are beyond dispute. The market access commitments that we made, the much strengthened rules we approved, and the World Trade Organization we decided to establish will create conditions favourable for further economic expansion through increased trade opportunities, as well as greater stability and predictability in the trade domain.

All throughout the seven-year negotiating period, Korea actively participated in the negotiations and made a real contribution to the success of the Round. Particularly noteworthy is, of course, Korea's acceptance of the principle of comprehensive tariffication in the agricultural area, despite the well-known political, social and cultural difficulties we will face in opening our rice market. This is indeed unmistakable testimony to Korea's firm commitment to the success of the Round and to the multilateral trading system.

While a solid foundation for the future trading system has been laid, there will be much hard work in the coming months as we complete the actual structure. Not only must we finalize our goods and services schedules and complete our legal drafting work, we must also develop a work programme on trade and the environment and discuss the establishment of the Interim Committee for the WTO. If we are to succeed with these upcoming tasks, the key words will be compromise and co-operation. By working together in a co-operative spirit, we can sidestep many difficult obstacles, just as we did last December.

I wish to add that Korea hopes the Uruguay Round package will enter into force with the shortest delay possible, hopefully by 1 January 1995. Korea will make every effort to complete its ratification process to meet that target date, and urges the other participants to do the same.

Now turning to the GATT's 1993 activities, while in many ways the Uruguay Round has overshadowed some of the normal GATT business, there was no lack of important achievements.

One example is the expansion in GATT participation as evidenced by a sizable increase in the number of contracting parties, and those who have joined the ranks as observers. There has also been a remarkable surge in applications for membership. This not only demonstrates the growing acceptance of GATT's philosophical underpinnings and importance, it also portends the continued expansion of international trade and world economic growth. Korea welcomes these new participants and is convinced that they recognize the need to firmly accept GATT's precepts and principles.

In reviewing other accomplishments, I am pleased to note that the TPRM has taken firm root as one of the most important functions of the GATT.

I am also pleased to recognize that the GATT has made considerable progress in appreciating the difficult issues surrounding trade and the environment. In our continuing pursuit of the goal of sustainable development, it is increasingly important that we find ways to balance the benefits and burdens arising from solutions to trade-related environmental issues.

With 1994 already upon us, I can see that it will be another year of challenges. In addition to the important tasks of finalizing and ratifying the Uruguay Round agreements and preparing for the inauguration of the WTO, a couple of important issues come to mind.

In 1993 again, the inadequate implementation of panel reports, or even the absence thereof, continued to plague us. While the Uruguay Round agreement will eventually resolve many of these problems, we must, nevertheless, continue to keep vigilant eyes on our progress in this area.

An increasing number of regional trade agreements have recently been concluded or notified to the GATT. The two most important agreements, NAFTA and the EEA, have just entered into force. With the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, we have to join hands to usher in an era where regional arrangements will complement and not compete with the multilateral trading system. In the Asia-Pacific region, it is our hope that APEC will play an important rôle in the realization of an "open regionalism" where all trade is free and unfettered.

Finally, I wish to conclude by saying that Korea will take an active part in all of these upcoming tasks and will continue to make its due contribution to the strengthening of the multilateral trading system.