

**GENERAL AGREEMENT
ON TARIFFS AND TRADE**

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CONTRACTING PARTIES
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PARAGUAY

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The delegation of Paraguay did not want to miss this opportunity to address the CONTRACTING PARTIES of GATT and express its satisfaction at taking part as a contracting party to the General Agreement for the first time.

As mentioned in the clear and comprehensive Report of the Council of Representatives in 1993, Paraguay completed its negotiations on accession to GATT last June. Thanks to the favourable vote of most of the contracting parties, Ambassador Luis González Arias signed the Protocol of Accession on 1 July 1993 which, by happy coincidence was the day the Director-General, Mr. Peter Sutherland took office. The instrument of ratification was deposited on 7 December 1993 which means that my country has been a member of GATT for just a few weeks.

Paraguay has 4.5 million inhabitants, with its particularly youthful population scattered over slightly more than 400,000 square kilometres. In recent years it has enjoyed an average 3 per cent growth rate, and trade accounts for a little over \$2,000 million per year. Its population is remarkably homogenous and is perhaps the best example of the blending of the indigenous and European population, with the result that Guaraní and Spanish are interchangeable means of communication. Paraguay is, at the moment, trying to consolidate its democracy with the fullest participation of all political, economic and social sectors.

Paraguay has acceded to GATT at a time when the memory of the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round negotiations is still fresh. This is an historic event, full of great hopes for a more rapid and balanced development for all the peoples of the world.

Beyond the congratulations, in which we share, on reaching the finishing post, our Organization must now face up to the difficult task of rounding off this success at the Marrakesh Ministerial Meeting and, subsequently, the challenge of implementing the agreements, respecting the spirit and the letter of the texts adopted.

To some extent, the Uruguay Round will begin in the coming months, in so far as all that has been so patiently negotiated must be used to create a new order, and let us hope that this leads to trade and development opportunities for all States, regardless of their size and influence in the world economy. Just as in the past we have called upon our main trade partners to show their leadership skills by making substantive offers and exercising flexibility when negotiating rules, in the future we will demand that that leadership set an example in terms of respecting the commitments made.

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Paraguay has had to make enormous sacrifices to ensure that it could meet the requirements related to accession. The Government has had to restructure its trade policy and restore new discipline in the monetary and fiscal system. At the same time, Paraguay began participating in the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) which, inter alia, aims to help the development of world trade by improving access to an expanded market that has a common external tariff and standardized rules.

Paraguay hopes that the other States currently negotiating their accession to the GATT see their efforts bear fruit and soon become members of this body, and for that reason urges the contracting parties involved in the accession negotiations to limit their demands to the provisions of the General Agreement and legal instruments in force.

Finally, Paraguay undertakes to make every effort to help implement the Uruguay Round Agreements and ensure the prudent and practical treatment of the new topics we are now confronting, such as trade and the environment.

As we begin our participation as a contracting party to the GATT, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the former Director-General, Mr. Arthur Dunkel, and extend its best wishes for further success to Mr. Peter Sutherland as head of the Secretariat.