

**GENERAL AGREEMENT
ON TARIFFS AND TRADE**

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Statement by H.E. Dr. Mounir Zahran
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

I shall attempt to be brief and focus on several issues that we deem of importance to the multilateral trading system, issues that shall remain with us after establishing the WTO. We are looking forward to a successful Ministerial Conference in Marrakesh with a view to the global signing of the agreements resulting from the Uruguay Round negotiations and the smooth transition to the new international trading system.

My delegation would like to reiterate its position vis-à-vis trade and the environment. Our position, in essence, strives to maintain a transparent multilateral trading system that will exclude using environmental measures as a new form of trade distortion and protectionism that may prove detrimental to the developmental objectives of less-developed economies. We look forward to further constructive dialogue in the Ukawa Group, the Committee on Trade and Development and a constructive deliberation of the special meeting of the Council that shall be held on the follow-up to the UNCED.

As for dispute settlement in GATT, there has been increasing resort to consultations within the multilateral system, half of which have involved developing economies. These consultations can be taken as stronger participation of developing countries in the multilateral trading system. The structural difficulties of developed economies must be resolved by resorting to market mechanisms and freer trade; further trade distortion should be avoided at all costs since we are heading towards a new international economic structure that may prove beneficial to all.

The gradual development of the international economic and commercial order must rely primarily on a sound system where trade disputes are settled in a fair, decisive and rapid approach. However, the implementation of panel reports, adopted by the GATT Council, have been rather reluctant, although we believe that in the light of the results of the Uruguay Round a good amount of these panel reports will be faithfully implemented.

The growing number of requests for accession to GATT provide us with a degree of optimism as regards the future universality of the multilateral trading system. There are currently fifteen requests for accession and working parties that have been established for that end. However, we hope that the increasing resort to regional trading agreements would not shake what faith we have in the multilateral trading system and would not have a trade-diverting, or a trade-distorting effect.

Finally, we look forward to a further expansion in GATT training and technical assistance activities for developing economies especially after the establishment of the WTO and the implementation of the results of the Uruguay Round. Furthermore, we look forward to the rapid appointment of a new Executive Director of the ITC whom we hope will give the Centre a new impetus towards assisting developing countries in making effective use of the results of the Uruguay Round.

I would like to pay special tribute to you, Mr. Chairman, for the effective manner with which you steered the work of the contracting parties since the end of the forty-eighth session. I would also salute Mr. Peter Sutherland, Director-General of GATT, for his fairness and firmness as Chairman of the Trade Negotiations Committee leading to the timely conclusion of the Uruguay Round.