

**GENERAL AGREEMENT
ON TARIFFS AND TRADE**

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE
PERMANENT MISSION OF BANGLADESH**

The following communication, dated 1 November 1994, concerning a press release by the Ministers of the Least-Developed Countries, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh for the information of contracting parties. It is being distributed at their request.

I am to inform you that the Ministers of the least-developed countries met in Columbus, Ohio, USA on 18 October 1994 on the occasion of the UN International Symposium on Trade Efficiency. At the end of the meeting a Press Release was brought out. A copy of the Press Release is sent herewith for your information.

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PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY
THE MINISTERS OF THE LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
AT COLUMBUS, OHIO, USA

1. The Ministers of the least-developed countries met in Columbus, Ohio, USA on 18 October 1994 on the occasion of the UN International Symposium on Trade Efficiency. They expressed their gratitude to the people and the Government of the USA for making excellent arrangements for the Symposium as well as for providing generous hospitality. They also thanked the UNCTAD Secretariat for its leadership role in the area of trade efficiency and for the substantive and organizational support to the Symposium. They pledged their support for the success of this event.

2. The Ministers welcomed the Trade Efficiency Programme and called for the setting up of trade points for greater participation in international trade. They agreed to take the necessary follow-up measures in this regard. The Ministers felt that in view of the lack of human skills, infrastructural facilities and financial resources, the capacity of LLDCs to establish and operate trade points and to derive benefits therefrom would depend greatly on the continued support of the UN System, particularly UNCTAD.

3. The Ministers felt that the tremendous difficulties faced by the least-developed countries in developing and diversifying their external trade greatly limit the possibility of employing the tools of trade efficiency. While LLDCs themselves have undertaken unilateral measures to liberalize and promote trade, their own efforts can produce very limited results unless substantial and effective support is made available to them. Moreover, the Final Act of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations will have important implications for them and adequate actions are needed to expand their trading and investment opportunities. They called upon the international community to provide LLDCs with significantly enhanced external support in the form of additional trade preferences, increased flows of concessional resources, compensatory financing, substantial debt relief and requisite technical assistance. The Ministers reiterated their proposal, made at the Marrakesh Ministerial Meeting, for the establishment of a unit on LLDCs in GATT/WTO to monitor the implementation of the special and differential provisions for LLDCs in the Final Act, and requested their Representatives in Geneva to follow up this matter.

4. The Ministers underlined the importance of the High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-Term Global Review of the Programme of Action for the LLDCs for the 1990s, to be held in 1995, and expressed the hope that it would provide an important opportunity for the international community to, inter alia, take a comprehensive look at the issues relating to external trade of LLDCs with a view to coming up with specific support measures in favour of these countries.