

**GENERAL AGREEMENT
ON TARIFFS AND TRADE**

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TUNISIA

Statement by Mr. Moncef Baati
Counsellor, Acting Chargé d'affaires

May I first of all congratulate you on the thoroughness of your introductory statement, and endorse your insights on the development of the multilateral trading system.

We are today taking part in a historic session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, in that all participants have chosen to follow the path of a free and efficient trading system in which all partners, small or large, will have their place and in which everyone has undertaken to comply with the trade rules and not to resort to the unfair practices that prevailed until not so very long ago.

The signing of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO is, for developing countries such as ours, both an incentive and a source of apprehension.

It is an incentive to take up the challenges stemming from the opening of markets in goods and services so as to increase our market shares and diversify our exports. For this, we count on the implementation in good faith of the undertakings entered into by all of us in the Uruguay Round.

While this challenge is a source of excitement, for some of us it is also a source of apprehension, as is normal when the traditional scheme of things is relinquished.

My country's successful experience since setting out along the path of liberalizing its economy and participating in the world economy means that we can approach with calm and conviction this new stage in trade relations that we have just opened with the historic decision to establish the WTO as from 1 January 1995.

Thanks to this strategy, my country has made remarkable progress as concerns both GNP and exports. The dividends we have earned were recognized by the Council at the special meeting devoted to our trade policy review.

In its capacity as Chairman of the OAU, Tunisia has devoted itself to making its modest contribution to the implementation of the Uruguay Round results by all the countries of our continent in the best possible conditions.

Thus, with the cooperation of GATT and other institutions, it organized a meeting of African Trade Ministers in Tunis in October 1994. The purpose of this meeting was to evaluate the results of the Uruguay Round and draw up a technical assistance programme for the implementation of those results in the best possible conditions for all African countries.

All participants agree that the Tunis Conference was a success. May I thank all those who played an active part in making the Conference such a success, and especially the GATT Secretariat.

I should like to appeal here to all Africa's partners, some of whom took part in this meeting, to ensure that the results of the Conference are translated into reality.

This underscores the importance that must be attached to the crucial issue of technical assistance in this difficult transition stage.

I should also like to recall that our countries attach the utmost importance to the implementation and fulfilment of the commitments made in the Uruguay Round, in particular as regards differential and more favourable treatment for developing countries, and especially for the least-developed countries, many of which are to be found in our continent.

I should not like to conclude this short statement without conveying to Mr. Sutherland and the Secretariat my sincere thanks for the priority they have always attached to technical assistance for our continent.