

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE REPUBLIC OF BENIN

The following communication, dated 20 September 1990, has been received from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Benin in Brussels.

In the context of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, Benin cannot unilaterally reduce, eliminate or bind its tariffs as it is bound by certain tariff obligations as a result of its membership of regional and sub-regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECWAS) and the West African Economic Community (CEAO).

Nevertheless, tariffs have been bound in all ECWAS member States. Furthermore, under Article 15 of Order No. 78-2 of 9 February 1978 establishing the Customs Tariff, the levying of protective duties is suspended on all products and merchandise imported into the Republic of Benin, whatever their origin or provenance.

Despite the foregoing, Benin has taken a number of measures towards the liberalization of its economy, which already represent a contribution to the multilateral trading system.

This principle has been unanimously recognized by the contracting parties during the negotiations.

Among the autonomous trade liberalization measures that should be taken into account, the following should be highlighted:

- the lifting by the Benin authorities of all measures prohibiting, or establishing quotas for, imports as from 21 July 1988, with the exception of those that present a danger to human health or State security and those of a strategic character for the State;
- the elimination of import licences for products from the EEC, the ACP States and the Free Zone as from 15 June 1990.

It should be recalled that, in accordance with the Declaration adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of 20 September 1986 at Punta del Este in Uruguay on the launching of the multilateral trade negotiations, in the course of the negotiations developing countries should not have to make contributions which are inconsistent with their development, financial and trade needs. Thus, in accordance with that Declaration, they enjoy some flexibility with regard to compliance with GATT provisions on trade liberalization.

GATT SECRETARIAT

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