

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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AUTONOMOUS LIBERALIZATION MEASURES

Trinidad and Tobago

The following communication, dated 16 April 1993, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago.

1. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to circulate to other participants in the Uruguay Round the following information on trade liberalization measures autonomously pursued since the inception of the Round, thus complying with the objectives of the Punta del Este Declaration.

2. The liberalization programme was undertaken within the wider context of structural adjustment which was predicated on prospects for opening up the economy to international competition, to restructure and diversify the productive base of the economy and to lay the basis of sustainable growth and economic development so as to achieve economic and social equity. This commitment was adopted against the background of external debt problems, balance of payments deficits, and unacceptably high unemployment levels. It is the expectation of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that the stringent measures taken by it would be fully taken into consideration by other participants in the Uruguay Round as additional commitments in the negotiations on market access.

3. From 1989 onwards, as the Uruguay Round proceeded, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has instituted a policy of progressive liberalization of its foreign trade régime. The main objective of the trade reform programme has been to free imports and exports from excessive administrative controls which impinge on the anti-export bias.

Trade reform

4. The trade reform measures undertaken were as follows:

- (i) The Negative List has been completely dismantled within the period 1 January to July 1992 with the exception of primary agricultural commodities and on those items which have been retained for consideration of national security, health or international agreements.

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- (ii) Replacement of the protection afforded to the items of the Import Negative List by a temporary surcharge system. However, a phased down programme has been introduced to reduce the current rates to zero by 1 January 1995.
- (iii) Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties Legislation was enacted on 12 August 1992.
- (iv) Liberalization of the foreign exchange régime: the adoption of a flexible exchange rate régime with effect from 13 April 1993. The rate of exchange is now established by the commercial banks and licensed foreign exchange dealers on the basis of supply and demand without intervention of the Central Bank.
- (v) Stamp Duty on raw materials and in some cases on capital goods will be gradually reduced to zero by 1 January 1995.

Trade facilitation

5. Administrative reform has been undertaken by the Customs Division through the introduction of an Automated System for the Collection of Customs Data (ASYCUDA). ASYCUDA will become operational by September 1993. In addition, there has been a reduction of documentation required for customs purposes. The eighteen documents required previously have been replaced by a single administrative document.

6. Additional measures in this regard are:

- (i) Reduction of all price controls with the exception of basic food items, from twenty-five items in 1990 to eleven items in 1993.
- (ii) Strengthening of measures to facilitate exporters in accessing inputs at world market prices.

Tariff reform

7. As a member of the Caribbean Community and Common Market, Trinidad and Tobago was instrumental in reforming the tariff bands and tariff rates of the Common External Tariff. The new CET will be phased down from a maximum rate of 45 per cent in 1992 to a maximum rate of 20 per cent as of 1 January 1998.