

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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TUNIS DECLARATION ON THE URUGUAY ROUND OF MULTILATERAL  
TRADE NEGOTIATIONS BY AFRICAN TRADE MINISTERS

In a communication dated 28 October 1993, the delegation of Tunisia has requested that the following "Declaration on the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations", issued on the occasion of the Twelfth Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade held in Tunis on 23-24 October 1993, be circulated to the participants in the Uruguay Round.

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We, African Ministers of Trade gathered at Tunis for the Twelfth Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade from 23-24 October 1993 having reviewed the state of play and taken stock of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, reaffirm our commitment to a successful and balanced conclusion of the Round based on the perceptions underlined by the Declaration of our Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade negotiations adopted in Abuja, Nigeria in June 1991.

It is with some concern, therefore, that we view the long delay in finalizing the negotiations which have already put considerable strain on our scarce human and financial resources. We can only express the hope that the collective desire of all Uruguay Round participants to conclude the negotiations by 15 December 1993, as agreed upon in the Trade Negotiations Committee, will be realized.

We stress that the issues which remain outstanding, particularly market access for African products, are central to a balanced outcome in these negotiations. While the Montreal Mid-Term Review results in this area are welcome, we note that these have not been followed by sufficient progress towards the objective of the Punta del Este Declaration of fullest liberalization of trade in tropical and natural resource-based products in their processed and semi-processed form which are of great export interest to our countries. In addition, African countries expect developed countries to improve market access conditions in the agricultural, textiles and other manufactured goods, as well as service sectors of interest to the African economy.

Furthermore, while we subscribe to the virtues of greater trade liberalization and strengthened rules and disciplines for a much more secure, predictable and equitable multilateral trading system in the belief that in the long run everyone stands to gain from the expansion of world trade, we are also aware that the benefits from trade liberalization resulting from the Uruguay Round would not be spread evenly.

Many of our countries have undertaken far-reaching autonomous trade liberalization measures in the context of structural adjustment programmes which should be recognized by developed countries as a significant contribution to the Uruguay Round trade liberalization process.

In the case of African countries, we are particularly concerned about the likely erosion of preferential margins and the adverse effects of the agricultural reform programme on net-food importing and least-developed African countries, which, taken together, could amount to a net loss for them from the Round unless concrete offsetting measures are incorporated in the final arrangements. In this regard, African Trade Ministers are seeking the strengthening of Part D of the text on agriculture in the Draft Final Act, to be applicable immediately after adoption of the results of the negotiations.

In the new areas, particularly in the draft agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), we foresee onerous obligations that would imply changes in domestic legislation or administrative practices or new legislation in order to comply with them. Furthermore, these obligations will need policy adaptation to ensure consistency with commitments undertaken. Therefore, unless adequate flexibility is provided in the various agreements for their implementation, our countries, especially the least developed among us, will be confronted with a formidable challenge.

While recognize that the various agreement from the Round will inevitably create new rights and obligations, we strongly stress that the establishment of a common institutional framework for the implementation of the results should not take away the current rights enjoyed by the African countries.

Against this background, we thus attach great importance to the evaluation of the results in the area of goods and services before the formal conclusion of the negotiations in order to ensure effective application of differential and more favourable treatment for developing countries in accordance with Part A, Section G of the Punta del Este Declaration. We strongly believe that for this evaluation to be meaningful it has also to include services and has to be conducted in good time with a view to allowing corrective measures to meet the genuine concerns of African countries participating of which the least-developed countries are the majority.

In seeking an acceptable balanced outcome in the negotiations from the African countries' standpoint, African participants will be guided by the following criteria:

- extent to which fullest liberalization of trade in tropical, agricultural and manufactured goods as well as natural resource-based products to be achieved, as stipulated in the Punta del Este mandate;
- erosion of preferential margins resulting from the above;
- degree of commitment to undertake specific offsetting measures for the adverse effects arising from the impact of higher prices for net-food importing countries and least-developed countries;
- consistency between developmental needs and obligations in the various agreements and, in particular, room for flexibility in the use of various policy instruments in both traditional and new areas (TRIMs, TRIPs and services);
- additional procedural obligations arising from new requirements for transparency;
- specific and concrete commitments to take measures within the GATT framework and in other appropriate fora to facilitate the expansion of the trading opportunities of the least-developed countries;

- restrictive technical measures and procedures applied by the developed countries to products from developing countries, in particular those coming from African countries.

Finally, in elaborating a new international trade agenda to address urgent issues for further promotion of an improved multilateral trading system that is more equitable and more functional, African countries would expect a balanced agenda which will include issues of interest to them. Such an agenda should aim at increasing the participation of our countries in international trade and assisting them in deriving maximum benefits from trade opportunities created by greater global trade liberalization. We consider that multilateral disciplines in the global management of the exchange rate system would make a significant contribution to the achievement of these objectives. In defining new multilateral trade negotiating objectives for the future, this subject should be taken into account.

This Declaration is without prejudice to the preferences already acquired on the basis of existing agreements and arrangements by all or some of the members of this group and, more specifically, as a result of all the ACP/EC Lomé Conventions.