

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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GHANA

Statement by the Hon. Mrs. Emma Mitchell
Minister for Trade and Industry

Let me begin by extending to His Majesty the King, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco, the deepest gratitude of the Ghana delegation for their kind and generous hospitality and the warm reception accorded to myself and the other members of my delegation. I also wish to express the appreciation of my delegation for the excellent arrangements and facilities put in place for the smooth conduct of this meeting.

On this historic occasion, I join other members of the international community of multilateral trading nations in congratulating you and your predecessors, Ministers Dr. Enrique Iglesias and Gros Espiel for your dedication and relentless efforts in bringing about this long awaited conclusion to the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. In these efforts, you were ably assisted by the Director-General, Mr. Peter Sutherland, and his predecessor Mr. Arthur Dunkel who ably discharged the arduous function of Chairman of the TNC.

My congratulations also go to all countries assembled here for their collective efforts in ensuring a successful outcome to the negotiations. This success has no doubt revitalized the multilateral trading system and brought renewed hope for the world's continued economic growth.

Our gathering here today is the culmination of some seven years of a common endeavour to establish a more open and viable multilateral trading system. The negotiations were, not surprisingly, long, protracted and arduous because our negotiators, conscious of the need to protect our respective national interests, had to also ensure a fair balance of advantages. I am of the firm view that we should feel justifiably proud of this achievement.

Even though the expectations of my country could not be fully satisfied, the results can generally be described as a truly remarkable achievement. With this outcome, new horizons for the promotion of our mutual trade lie before us.

The Uruguay Round negotiations have actually gone further than any previous negotiations in extending and strengthening the rule of law in international trade. The Round has also witnessed greater participation than ever before by developing countries, who have thereby registered their interest in a multilateral trading system that has demonstrated the ability and willingness to take their special needs into consideration, and to provide adequate support for the weakest of the weak. We hope that our faith in the relevance of the multilateral trading system in creating and maintaining opportunities for the sustainable development of developing countries is well founded. It is in this context that we have endorsed our readiness to accept the Uruguay Round package in its entirety, which to us is a major undertaking and a big sacrifice on the part of our weak economies.

Ghana, like other small trading countries, has embarked on a very far reaching structural adjustment programme with the objective of revitalizing our economy and helping to integrate it into

the world economy on the basis of market forces. This focus is, to us, in tune with the open and equitable multilateral trading system which is the central theme of the Uruguay Round Agreement.

The adjustment programme has been implemented at great social cost and the task of maintaining its momentum has become politically more complex and demanding but we are willing to go further because we are convinced that the end result will be more jobs, higher per capita incomes, increased trade and a considerable improvement in living conditions.

The speed of implementation of our recovery programme will, however, be greatly facilitated if we, as small trading countries, can make immediate use of the numerous opportunities resulting from the Round. Unfortunately, our countries are the countries whose trade structure is characterized by a high dependence on a narrow base of primary commodities as the main source of foreign exchange and declining commodity prices resulting in acute foreign exchange shortages, persistent balance-of-payment deficits and mounting foreign debt. These are, in fact, the countries in which prospects for trade creation and increased participation in the multilateral trading system have remained inadequate, while institutional frameworks for the implementation of the Uruguay Round results remain weak and sometimes non-existent. Yet our countries have agreed to undertake new obligations in various sectors in support of the Uruguay Round package.

My delegation is of the firm view that the success of the Round should not be measured only in terms of the openings and trade opportunities that have thus been created but more significantly by the ability of all participating countries particularly, the poor and the fragile ones, to take advantage of the opportunities to positively transform their economies.

Indeed, the Round will be meaningless, if, at the end of it all, some participants especially African countries are unable to utilize the benefits to improve the well-being of their people. The delegation of Ghana, therefore, considers it important for contracting parties to also agree on supplementary measures to help alleviate and eventually remove the trade problems of the low-income contracting parties.

Our urgent concern therefore is for special, clearly defined and well focused programmes to help our weak countries in their efforts to develop the capacity not only to increase their share of world trade in merchandise and services but also in fulfilling their new obligations under the Round. I venture at this point to mention the need to ensure that vital development finance is made readily available to those of us making such excruciating sacrifices in the face of enormous difficulties to implement market oriented economic policies.

I wish also to mention technological innovation which these days has become critical in the attempts at securing export buoyancy. Technology is seriously altering the distribution of economic activity and has become a key factor in determining the competitive position in international trade. For the poor countries, access to new and emerging technology on preferential and concessional terms is considered by the Ghana delegation as crucial for the efficiency of their industry.

The new vitality of the multilateral trading system under the flag of the World Trade Organization should be brought to bear in identifying cooperation arrangements with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to provide extra support for the WTO's poor members in meeting the new challenges and opportunities provided by the new multilateral trade agreement. Other UN organs like UNCTAD, ITC, FAO, UNIDO and UNDP should also be encouraged to be more forthcoming in assisting our small countries to develop the necessary capacities and product development programmes to enable us to increase our participation in the world trading system as full members of the World Trade Organization.

It is our hope therefore that between now and implementation time serious thinking would be done to provide concrete plans to address these concerns. This to our mind is the only way the high hopes of the WTO Agreement could be achieved for the benefit of not only the rich and powerful but also for the weak and poor. We accordingly declare Ghana's support for the Tunis Declaration of African Trade Ministers for an international conference to address the technical assistance needs of Africa with regard to the implementation of the Uruguay Round package.

I wish to conclude by placing on record Ghana's profound gratitude to the GATT Technical Cooperation Division and the UNCTAD African MTN Project for the invaluable support extended to our countries during the negotiations. I must confess that without that support our effective participation would have been greatly impaired. I hope we can count on such continued and consistent support during the implementation phase of the Round.

With the finalization of the Uruguay Round, we have entered a new era of international trade. What is required is a purposeful shift into this new era which is full of hope particularly for developing countries in their efforts at social development.