

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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IRELAND

Statement by Mr. Charles McCreevy
Minister for Tourism and Trade

It gives me great pleasure to be here today in Morocco for this historic Conference.

I want to pay special tribute to his Majesty King Hassan II for his contribution to the success of the Conference. The hospitality shown by the Moroccan authorities and the Moroccan people has been overwhelming and I thank them sincerely.

After seven years of negotiations of the Uruguay Round and a number of failures and perceived failures we have at last reached the end of the road. The signing ceremony which will take place on Friday will signal the end of a long period of hard bargaining between the world's trading nations which has resulted in the most comprehensive trade agreement in history.

I want to congratulate all who contributed in any way to make it happen. I am particularly proud of the influence of my own country, Ireland, on the progress of the negotiations. My good friend and former European Commissioner Ray McSharry made, I think, a major contribution to the putting together of the Blair House accord which proved so important to the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and, of course, Peter Sutherland orchestrated the achievement of the final deal.

The ambitious targets set in Punta del Este in 1986 looked unachievable at various times during the course of the negotiations but with dedication and commitment by all concerned we have got an agreement which will set the framework for the development and evolution of world trade into the next century.

This agreement is a landmark because it brings key sectors like services, agriculture and intellectual property within the scope of the multilateral trading system. The establishment of the World Trade Organization will create a new coherence in world economic policy and the new dispute settlement mechanism will help to create a fairer and more equitable trading system.

Above all else, the Uruguay Round agreement represents a rebirth of the multilateral trading system and a move away from protectionism and the use of bilateral means to resolve trade disputes.

While I welcome the outcome of the negotiations, I am of course very conscious of the fact that it presents challenges as well as opportunities for us all. I do not believe that any country is totally satisfied with the result but this is always a real indication that a balance has been achieved.

Ireland, certainly, will face challenges in some sectors of its economy as a result of this agreement. The results of the agriculture negotiations, for example, are of necessity a compromise

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between the different interests of the many GATT parties. Also in the case of textiles the European Union, of which Ireland is a member, will now have to face greater competition with the opening up of its market in the context of the integration of the Multifibre Arrangement into GATT.

However, the achievement of the overall political objective of a stable world trading environment, and the benefits of ongoing liberalization of world trade, far outweigh any adverse sector specific impact the agreement will create. The Uruguay Round contains many pluses for the world economy which should have a positive benefit for my country in terms of output and employment.

The GATT deal is the cumulation of half a century of trade liberalization and, while it does not create the panacea for all our trading difficulties, it gives us a new platform on which to build and expand in the future. The globalization of trade and the increasing interdependence of different economies and cultures is making the need for cohesion in world economic policy more necessary.

We do not live on a frontier but in highly populated societies depending for survival on cultivation and management of resources. We must recognize this fact and define the rules which will have regard to the complex economic and social issues involved.

A topic of growing importance in the context of our work today is the relationship between trade and the environment. The debate has intensified since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development endorsed the principle of sustainable development as the guiding force for economic development worldwide. Indeed the "greening" of trade policies promises to be one of the more complex and politically charged issues to be tackled in the future. At the heart of the issue is how to strike the difficult balance between the drive for greater trade liberalization and the need to counter environmental degradation.

These issues must be addressed urgently in a balanced way by the World Trade Organization and I fully endorse the TNC Declaration of 15 December last and the Ministerial decision in this regard.

Another issue which needs to be examined in the context of the increasing global economic interdependence, to which I have referred, is the trade - social link. International cohesion, cooperation, integration - in order to command the respect and loyalty of millions of private citizens in different nation States - require a vision embracing the values on which our societies rest including an absolute commitment to human rights. Bringing about a viable international society is a complex matter involving political, economic and social issues but it is ultimately about improving the quality of peoples lives.

For this reason I believe that the future World Trade Organization must address the subject in a transparent and multilateral way which is not protectionist. It must be pursued with the aim of achieving faster growth in developing countries, in particular, through measures to remove rather than create, barriers to developing country exports. The objective is no longer in question; what we must do now is decide on the nature and timing of the work to be done in the social sphere.