

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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**AUSTRIA**

Statement by H.E. Mr. Wolfgang Schüssel  
Federal Minister for Economic Affairs

First of all I would like to thank His Majesty the King for offering Marrakesh as the site of the concluding and culminating event of the Uruguay Round. The perfect organization of this meeting in the splendid historical city of Marrakesh and the hospitality of the Moroccan people form a perfect setting for this conference of truly global significance.

We are about to sign the Final Act of the most ambitious round of multilateral trade negotiations ever conducted. Let me stress that Austria attributes the highest significance to the results achieved, which will be beneficial for all participating countries in terms of improved trade opportunities, stimulation of growth and the creation of new jobs.

In our view, there are four major accomplishments which we can be proud of.

First, we have succeeded in substantially liberalizing market access and in strengthening the legal framework. Thus, we will be able to operate under conditions of higher effectiveness. The open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system is more transparent, predictable and effective and will lead us to avoid unilateralism. The enhanced confidence in it should enable us to fully implement the commitments we are going to sign tomorrow.

We welcome the inclusion of the standstill commitment in the Marrakesh Declaration.

Second, we have finally completed the original concept of the founding fathers of the GATT by creating the World Trade Organization at a time where the prospects for its worldwide acceptance are better than ever before.

Third, important sectors which until now have remained outside the scope of GATT have finally been brought under multilateral discipline. This is the case for services, TRIMS and TRIPS. Austria, one of the most important providers of services in the world, attributes particular importance to the General Agreement on Trade in Services. The initial package of liberalization commitments attached to it constitutes an important first step in this area which will lead to further measures of liberalization.

Fourth, agriculture will be progressively brought under the ambit of the multilateral WTO rules. The liberalization in this sensitive sector will have far-reaching repercussions on the world food markets and significantly reduce existing distortions and price disparities. Austria has gone out of her way to facilitate an agreement demanding considerable sacrifices from Austrian farmers.

We also welcome the reintegration of the textile and clothing sector into the GATT.

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Turning now to the new work programme ahead of us, I should like to refer to three main areas:

- enhanced integration of developing countries;
- the interrelationship between environment and trade; and
- the question of social standards and international trade.

We welcome the sustained efforts by many developing countries to liberalize trade. A number of them have emerged during the last years as major trading partners, many others will do so in the years to come. It is particularly encouraging that many of them have recently joined the GATT and others submitted application for membership. They will find in the WTO an institution which will facilitate their full integration in an open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system. I trust that this will help them in achieving sustainable growth and development.

As we all know, environmental degradation does not stop at national borders. Therefore, the dialogue on trade and environment has to be conducted at an international level. Austria fully endorses the balanced work-programme for the Committee on Trade and Environment. We believe that it will enable the WTO to elaborate international solutions for reconciling liberal international trade with the goals of environmental protection. Coordination, cooperation and compatibility of economic development and environmental objectives are far advanced in a number of countries including my own. We are fully convinced that adequate environmental policies are a prerequisite for worldwide sustainable development.

In our view, trade and economic policy cannot be considered without regard to the social context. Therefore, we believe that the WTO should not hesitate to look into such questions as child exploitation, forced labour or the denial to workers of free speech or free association, and their interrelationship with trade. In the view of my Government, this interrelationship should be closely looked at by the WTO in cooperation with ILO and other organizations. In doing so, special attention should be paid to possible abuses of social concerns for protectionist purposes. Such abuses should be strictly avoided. Practical solutions which facilitate the realization of both goals, namely free trade and social justice, will benefit mankind as a whole. Such solutions will have to pay special attention to the needs of developing countries.

In concluding, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the guidance which you and your predecessors offered to us in the difficult years of negotiations.

I would also like to pay tribute to the former Director-General Mr. Arthur Dunkel. In particular, I would like to highlight the outstanding performance of our Director-General, Mr. Peter Sutherland, who gruelled down the final phase of the negotiations in a most exemplary manner.