

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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STATEMENT AT THE CLOSING MEETING BY  
H.E. MR. LUIS VIDAL ZAGLIO, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF URUGUAY

Only a few days ago we extended a cordial greeting to the delegations which had come to Punta del Este from all parts of the world to attend the Eighth Session of the GATT Committee on Trade and Development and today we have to say farewell at the end of these meetings.

As representative of the Government of the Republic, I should like to express the hope that the atmosphere of Punta del Este, which is one of traditional hospitality for our visitors, has at all times met the wishes of everyone connected with this meeting and that you will all have had a pleasant stay in our country.

The Eighth Session of this Committee constitutes a new link in the chain of achievements which, taken as a whole, represents the evolution in time of trade and economic relations between the contracting parties to GATT.

We must therefore interpret what has happened here in the light of what I have just pointed out.

Delegations have been mainly concerned with two major items which, being closely linked with one another in certain sectors, often run together into a single topic.

One of them is the situation of the less-developed countries; the other, prospects for the Trade Negotiations Conference which we generally refer to as the Kennedy Round.

The importance of these two topics called for a vigorous exchange of views between the delegations and this has taken place; the conclusions approved this afternoon reflect faithfully the multiplicity of positions and attitudes which have legitimately been expressed in the course of the discussions.

The text agreed to by the Committee contains certain general lines that are worthy of attention.

On the one hand, the economically more advanced countries have reiterated the undertakings given by them on earlier occasions with respect to the more effective implementation of Part IV and their resolute intention to grant really significant concessions to the less-developed States in the Kennedy Round.

This reaffirmation constitutes a powerful stimulus as the Trade Negotiations Conference moves into its final and therefore decisive stage. Admittedly, one could hardly expect less from the more developed countries; for their statements confirm what they had already indicated in the past; but having regard to the magnitude of the problems facing the developing countries, any renewed expression that there has been no change in the line followed is a source of confidence and sincerity.

For their part, the less-developed countries have taken the opportunity of this Eighth Session to express their concern and requests regarding the scope of the concessions they hope to receive in the Kennedy Round and to clarify the various modalities which, in their opinion, will contribute to that objective.

No doubt, the objectives of the countries to which Part IV refers are well-known, both from the general point of view and from the aspect of the individual situation of each of those countries. If we consider this fact in conjunction with the aims and objectives of the Kennedy Round, we realize the tremendous scope of these negotiations and the need to preclude any disappointment of the hopes advanced over the past three years in regions of the world which must inevitably solve tremendous material problems; we must bear in mind in particular that the GATT Trade Negotiations Conference has been given top priority, and by ensuring the closest attention of participating governments this has therefore increased the expectations attaching to the Conference. In other words, the combination of factors occurring in the context of the Kennedy Round multiplies the possible effects of its results and places us in a situation from which there is no retreat.

The contracting parties have crossed the Rubicon, and in years to come the GATT will be judged by many countries in the light of what the Kennedy Round has yielded in the way of trade liberalization, and the creation and expansion of markets. The effects of the Kennedy Round are not limited by its own terms of reference, they will go much farther in the existence of GATT, which covers innumerable activities. Residual restrictions, dumping, tariff nomenclature, the work of Committee II, individual import restrictions - adequate solutions will have to be found to all these in the Kennedy Round.

Nevertheless, one should point out a good sign in the institutional development of the General Agreement - which was originally conceived as an essentially technical mechanism for trade relations - in that it seems to be increasingly receptive to considerations that are not exclusively utilitarian, and is even tending to become an instrument of justice and equity.

The excellent Spanish writer, Pió Baroja, stated that human beings are always dreaming of auspicious events, but always in the past or the future, never in the present. In the international organizations in general, the developing countries are still dreaming in the way described by the writer. Our hopes were expressed in the Uruguayan Parliament more than twenty years ago, on the occasion of the approval of one of the most important treaties, and now, twenty years later, we find that our most cherished dreams still lie in the future.

For all these reasons, it is our hope that when the moment comes to sign in Geneva the protocols embodying the major tasks carried out in the Kennedy Round, we shall all be able to sign with a feeling of satisfaction derived from the conviction that not only are we gaining something but that we have all contributed to improving trade and through it the prosperity of the other participants.

At this Eighth Session of the Committee we have had the pleasure of welcoming many distinguished persons, including the Chairman, Ambassador Carlos Valenzuela of Chile, the Director-General of GATT, Mr. Wyndham White, and also the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Dr. Raul Prebisch. They have all spoken brilliantly and wisely. Their presence here and that of the other representatives meeting at Punta del Este has been an honour for my country.

Gentlemen, the Uruguayan nation and the Uruguayan Government are profoundly honoured by your presence in our country, and we are aware of the significance of the choice of Uruguay for your deliberations. Before you disperse to return to your own countries we should like to wish you "God speed", and to express the hope that you will have happy memories of your welcome here and of what you have seen of our beautiful country, and the way in which human freedoms and true democracy are assured here.