

**GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE**

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COSTA RICA: STATEMENT BY MRS. MUNI FIGUEREZ DE JIMENEZ,
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL,
15-19 SEPTEMBER 1986, PUNTA DEL ESTE,
URUGUAY

I should like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of this session and would ask you to convey our thanks for the hospitality shown us by the Government of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay on this occasion.

It is a cause of deep satisfaction to the Government of my country that these proceedings are taking place for the first time in Latin America, and particularly in the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, a sister country to which we are bound by strong historical ties and a shared dedication to democracy.

In Costa Rica the fluctuations of the market for our traditional products in the last few years and the uncertainty regarding the Central American market have made it necessary for us to redefine our relationship with the world market. We have therefore established a Ministry of Foreign Trade and we have begun to establish relations with international bodies, among which this one is of particular significance.

On 15 March 1984 the GATT Council approved observer status for Costa Rica and on 15 July 1985 we applied for provisional accession. In the next few days we shall be commencing the procedures laid down for the accession of Costa Rica to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

We are therefore in the happy position of taking the necessary steps for our accession at the time of this Ministerial meeting held to launch a New Round of GATT negotiations.

We Costa Ricans wish to participate as far as we are able in these negotiations. While it cannot be said that GATT has fully met all the aspirations of the developing countries, we believe that there is a greater possibility of solving our trade problems through it than by dealing with them on a bilateral basis.

Our experience in other international forums and our long practice of dialogue as the favoured instrument for the settlement of disputes leads us to hope that we may contribute to the success of this Round and to the

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strengthening of the multilateral trading system, so that it may become increasingly effective in pursuing the development objectives we have set ourselves, always aiming for greater equity in North-South relations.

We wish to contribute, as far as we are able, to an early solution of the problems arising from the application of restrictive measures on imports, especially those not provided for in the General Agreement, and to the complete elimination of those affecting textiles, agricultural products, tropical products and natural resources.

The Costa Rican delegation also considers that other new subjects should be fully discussed in this Round of negotiations, but that the discussion should be so oriented as to permit maintenance of the development objectives pursued by our countries.

We hope that our participation in this Round will give us an opportunity to become acquainted with and to study thoroughly this pre-eminent trade forum and to support the process, initiated in 1964, of linking trade problems and development issues. Despite the fact that the objectives GATT has set itself are basically in the field of trade, Costa Rica would hope that a study of monetary and financial problems, and especially of external indebtedness, will be undertaken by this Round, as these matters are closely linked with the problems of international trade.

Costa Rica would like to take advantage of the multilateral dispute settlement machinery which GATT makes available to its members, particularly the provisions concerning proof of injury, so as to avoid the raising of tariffs by importing countries to compensate for the existence of alleged export subsidies; it would like to participate, as far as possible, in the groups which decide on particular multilateral rules and, upon joining GATT, would like to negotiate trade concessions for its products.

To sum up, therefore, we shall endeavour to participate, as appropriate, in all the committees established in the new negotiating Round.

I should like to express our appreciation of the work carried out over several months by the delegations of the contracting parties, by the Director-General, Arthur Dunkel, and by the GATT secretariat in the Preparatory Committee for this Ministerial meeting.

With the presence of our delegation at this Ministerial meeting, we wish to commence full participation in all the committees that may be established in the New Round.

Finally, I trust that my statement has been appropriately brief.