

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN GROUP<sup>1</sup> ON THE TRADE IMPLICATIONS  
OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM PRACTICED BY SOUTH AFRICA,  
DELIVERED AT PUNTA DEL ESTE (URUGUAY) AT THE  
MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE GATT HELD FROM 15 TO 19 SEPTEMBER 1986

Allow me to say a few words on behalf of the African Group participating in this historic Ministerial meeting of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). In the first place, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the President, the Government and people of the Oriental Republic of URUGUAY for their initiative to host this meeting. We want to record also our thanks for the warm, friendly and fraternal hospitality extended to us ever since we did set our foot on the soil of URUGUAY at this beautiful, soothing and refreshingly calm town of Punta del Este. We are also grateful for the materials placed at our disposal to facilitate our work and make our meeting a resounding success.

We note that for the first time the Contracting Parties are meeting in a developing country to launch a new Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. This singular event reflects the new mood and positive thinking within the GATT and demonstrates the new emphasis on the aspirations of the developing countries to move together with their developed partners in the quest for the new thrust within the GATT - i.e. to put the world economy in a new orbit towards the 21st century.

However, when we talk of trade and economic development, these concepts we must all agree, are founded on basic human values and that man should be the ultimate beneficiary of all human endeavour. As you already know the very basic principles and objectives of the GATT represent an embodiment of these human values. Therefore, any Contracting Party which does not believe in those human values clearly contravenes the provisions of the GATT.

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<sup>1</sup> Pronounced on behalf of the African Group by H.E. Alphonse Souchlaty POATY, Minister for Trade, small and medium enterprises and craft industries of the Popular Republic of Congo.

The purpose of this intervention on behalf of the African Group within the GATT is to bring to your attention and for that of this august assembly the fact that a Contracting Party, sitting in our midst, still believes in and practices archaic economic policies which dehumanize the majority of its population within a system called APARTHEID; a population whose productive activities generate the goods which enable South Africa to benefit from the provisions of the GATT.

We, the African Group, are bringing this matter to your attention today because, all along we in Africa have realised that the only way to bring about human dignity to that part of the world is to dismantle completely this inhuman system of APARTHEID. Indeed the current situation in Southern Africa is tense and unstable. In a vain attempt to stem the tide of freedom, the Apartheid regime of South Africa has opted for increased confrontation with its own people, its neighbours and with the international community.

Internally, and in defence of the obnoxious system of Apartheid, the Pretoria regime has unleashed a reign of terror which is now claiming a daily toll of innocent lives reaching genocidal proportions. Externally, the regime has continued its illegal occupation of Namibia and parts of Angola and has engaged in a ruthless campaign of destabilisation and terrorism against its neighbours, in particular the Frontline States. In furthering that policy, the racist regime has resorted to the recruitment training, equipment and deployment of armed bandits thereby causing enormous human and material damage to the Frontline States. It has also attempted to hoodwink the international community into believing that meaningful change is taking place in South Africa by announcing cosmetic changes to the Apartheid system.

The reaction of the people inside South Africa has been one of fearless and determined resistance. They are rising in their numbers to confront the Apartheid regime and intensifying the campaign for the complete elimination of Apartheid by rendering it unworkable and making South Africa ungovernable.

In an effort to reduce the tensions in South Africa and to accelerate the process of dismantling Apartheid it will be recalled that, we in Africa have always believed that the only way that the majority of South African can participate genuinely in the provisions of

the GATT rules is for the Contracting Parties to coordinate and help to speedily impose comprehensive and mandatory sanctions. That is the only way, we are convinced, that we can bring down the racist regime and avoid a blood bath. We therefore seize this occasion to reiterate the call for TOTAL and MANDATORY SANCTIONS, including TRADE EMBARGO to be imposed on South Africa. In this regard, however, we appreciate and acknowledge the recent positive developments and specific steps being taken within the United States of America and the European Community. Nevertheless it is our fervent hope that, not too long from now, the United States, the European Community and indeed other Contracting Parties which are in the position to do so will move from 'limited' and 'selective' sanctions to total and mandatory sanctions.

I may seem to have been making a political statement -it was not- it was only a passionate appeal to this august body; an appeal that is being made out of concern that there are people out there -millions of them- in Namibia and South Africa- who deserve genuine representation in this very historic and epoch-making session of the GATT launching the URUGUAY ROUND intended to bring order into the World Economy for the 21st Century and indeed for the benefit of all mankind.

The decisions that this conference will take will have far-reaching consequences for the majority of the South African and Namibian peoples who should, by right, be represented here today. That is why, in conclusion Mr. Chairman, we would wish that this statement be made part of the records of this meeting so that future generations in South Africa would know that Africa within the GATT forum was not unaware of their plight and aspirations to participate genuinely and contribute their modest share to achieve a fair and balanced international trade system that the GATT is expected to foster.