

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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POLAND

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Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade

My delegation shares the assessment of the international economic and trade situation as presented in your remarks, Mr. Chairman, at the opening of this Session. The world economy is indeed affected by serious disequilibrium. Such imbalances have an increasingly negative impact on countries which find themselves in balance-of-payments difficulties of such magnitude as to pose a threat to the development process itself.

The most important development in GATT since the Forty-First Session has been the launching of the Uruguay Round. The compromise reached at Punta del Este clearly demonstrates the ability of the GATT system to respond -- even if on a limited scale -- to the challenge posed by the expansion of protectionist sentiments and actions. The decision to begin the new round of negotiations does not in itself provide any solution. It represents, however, a chance for liberalization of international trade and for improving access to markets, which is of such critical importance for developing and other indebted countries. The ultimate effect of the Uruguay Round will be determined by the ability of the GATT system to generate in the coming months the necessary amount of mutual trust and confidence. Only then will the smaller trading nations be persuaded that they can also expect to share in the benefits of the negotiating process, as stated in the opening phrases of the Punta del Este Declaration. It is obvious that the necessary level of confidence will not be possible without a reversal of the dangerous process of using GATT as a forum for trade-distorting actions taken for non-economic objectives.

Therefore, all participants in the round should strictly observe the commitments on standstill and rollback which are contained in the Ministerial Declaration.

All organs and bodies established in the Uruguay Round should be open for all participants, and a maximum of transparency must be observed.

The success of the round will also depend on how much each and every participant will be prepared to reconcile his interests with those of others.

Such reconciliation does not have to entail net disadvantage to some partners for the net benefit of others. On the contrary, all countries stand to gain from a balanced compromise based on the proper mix of adjustments in the international and domestic economic policies of individual contracting parties.

Such adjustments are also being undertaken in my country in the form of a comprehensive set of economic policy measures aimed at increasing Poland's share in world trade. This change in the country's economic system goes clearly along the lines indicated by the General Agreement.

I would not like to end this statement without expressing my delegation's appreciation, Mr. Chairman, for your personal contribution, both as Chairman of the Council and as Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, to the common cause of making GATT better and more effective.