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Statement by Mr. Pierre Ndzengue Second Secretary, Permanent Mission

My delegation wishes at the outset to congratulate the secretariat on the perfect organization of this session, which augurs well for the results we will achieve.

Our session is being held at a particularly important time when the international economic environment, recently aggravated by what is commonly called the stock-market and monetary crisis, poses a pressing challenge to our various countries. In this climate of concern and of anxious questioning, GATT's rôle is all the more relevant.

My delegation remains profoundly attached to the spirit which prevailed during the launching of the Uruguay Round, and thus remains equally attached to the political commitments made at Punta del Este in favour of developing contracting parties. As the distinguished representative of Sweden so rightly emphasized on 1 December 1987, all countries have something to gain from this Round, provided all the cards are placed on the table, and provided the cards are not marked. We consider that the negotiations in which our delegations are engaged are a give-and-take process, but their success will depend on a number of factors, chief among which are:

- that the time-table of work established by the various groups should be respected;
- and that the will should really exist on all sides to undertake a genuine liberalization of international trade.

Allow me briefly to comment on these factors. With regard to the time-table of work, I note with satisfaction that work is indeed progressing properly. What is more, I also note that in some negotiating groups the specific proposals already tabled are unquestionable evidence of their authors' desire to negotiate and concern to tackle the fundamental issues. These proposals are encouraging, and we would like to hope that this process will accelerate. It is therefore important to avoid "going the whole hog", since that could paralyse and jam the whole machine.

With regard to the liberalization of international trade, which is the final objective of the Uruguay Round, my delegation wishes to reaffirm its attachment to this cause. However, it should be pointed out that, in view

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of the de facto imbalance between the various contracting parties, this liberalization does not and cannot have the same significance for the North and for the South. Indeed, this inequality is recognized both by the General Agreement and by the Ministerial Declaration of Punta del Este, and quite appropriately these two instruments provide for various measures to correct this imbalance. It is the hope of my delegation that these measures will be respected so as to allow developing contracting parties to participate actively in international trade.

In this context, my delegation wishes to congratulate the secretariat on the many forms of technical co-operation undertaken for that category of contracting parties. It notes with satisfaction the great interest taken by the Director-General in these measures, and also welcomes the encouraging measures taken by some developed contracting parties to promote such technical assistance.

It is now necessary to take the essential steps to reinforce the GATT technical co-operation programme, with a view to facilitating the effective participation of developing contracting parties in the trading system of the General Agreement.

In conclusion, the hopes raised at Punta del Este must not be disappointed. The Uruguay Round should allow all contracting parties in general, and the developing contracting parties in particular, to bring about an appreciable improvement in the economic situation. In this connection, the adoption of domestic measures to encourage the liberalization of international trade is essential, as are measures that will allow access to markets.

Finally, the Uruguay Round should allow the effective implementation of the Enabling Clause, which is a positive response to the imbalance to which I referred a moment ago, and whose continued existence within the GATT legal system seems threatened by the frequent use of the "gradual return clause". This development would without any doubt undermine our confidence in GATT and in its capacity to contribute towards a response to the crisis. My delegation therefore quite naturally attaches particular importance to the liberalization of trade in tropical products and in natural-resource based products, as well as to respect for the standstill and rollback commitments.