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NIGERIA

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First of all, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the current state of affairs of the international trading environment. By sheer coincidence, this year's Session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES is taking place at a very opportune time. This is so because immediately preceding it was the historic World Bank/IMF meeting in West Berlin and immediately following it there will be the very important mid-term Trade Negotiations Committee's review conference in Montreal. It is the hope of my delegation that next month's review conference would provide an ample opportunity for a useful exchange of views which would lead to a greater understanding of the current imbalances in the world economy. Nigeria believes that for the Uruguay Round to be meaningful, there is need for a re-orientation of world trade towards sustainable growth in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

The task before us is to agree on acceptable sets of rules which would combat protectionism. Such rules include, in our opinion, effective surveillance, the setting up of a workable trade dispute-settlement mechanism, rollback of persistent protectionist moves by powerful trading nations and increased access of the products of developing countries to the markets of developed countries without rigid insistence on linkages and reciprocity. The solution to the current world economic problems would require an integrated strategy that would, among other things, take into consideration the debt crisis and its incidental effects on developing countries, as well as the special predicaments of the least-developed countries.

After all, the common expectation of all of us in 1986 at Punta del Este was that with the Uruguay Round seeing the light of day, distortions to world trade would be a thing of the past. Indeed, the main thrust of the Punta del Este Declaration was to develop a more open, viable and durable multilateral trading system, which would bring about further liberalization and expansion of world trade to the benefit of all countries, especially the developing countries.

Contrary to these expectations, the progress of work so far, whether in the framework of the Uruguay Round or within the regular GATT activities, is such as to heighten fears instead of allaying them. The progress of work has, in some respects, clearly fallen short of expectations while the implementation of standstill and rollback commitments is

still far from satisfactory. Despite some demonstration of political will by some developed countries to enter into serious negotiations, trade in tropical products and agriculture continues to be hampered by tariff and non-tariff barriers including quantitative restrictions, all of which have severely restricted market access for products of interest to developing countries.

Furthermore, the existing provisions, which form the legal basis for developing countries to resort to emergency actions in order to safeguard their balance-of-payments positions, are being challenged at will by developed countries. The application of differential and more favourable treatment together with GSP concessions are being similarly relegated. In short, the right of weaker nations to self-defence under the GATT system is being gradually eroded, and this negative development is giving rise to serious concerns among the developing countries.

It is against the background of this dismal situation that many developing countries are taking part in the Uruguay Round. Nevertheless, my country, like other developing countries, is going to Montreal with an open mind in the hope that the developed countries would demonstrate greater political will and restore the necessary confidence in the remaining half of the Uruguay Round. In particular, and in consideration of the central rôle of agriculture in the economies of the developing countries and in world trade as a whole, Nigeria would like to see the proposals by the African, Caribbean and Latin American countries gain acceptance by the other groups, because they are not inconsistent with the broad elements highlighted in the Cairns Group's proposal and others in general.

As you are fully aware, the challenge of growth calls for the expansion of Africa's share of international trade which, at present, is roughly four per cent or less. It must always be borne in mind that Africa is the least-developed Continent by the United Nations standards. If the current downward trend in Africa's share of world trade is to be arrested, policies of developed countries that negatively affect the international economic environment, leading to a downward pressure on the demand for the prices of African countries' products and thereby aggravating the latter's economic problems, must receive the attention of this organization, especially during the forthcoming mid-term Ministerial review conference in Montreal.