

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON

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TARIFFS AND TRADE

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CONTRACTING PARTIES
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NICARAGUA

Statement by Mr. Juan Gazol Salcedo Minister-Counsellor, Permanent Mission

My delegation would like to make a few short remarks, prompted by our ideas and experience and by some of the views expressed during the general debate, on the progress made in the Uruguay Round and on the current situation of this organization and of international trade.

We developing countries continue to hope for concrete results from the Round, but our hopes are constantly dwindling. We perceive no real will on the part of the major trading partners to make significant contributions, commensurate with the development and strength of their economies, in the areas which are of particular interest to us such as tropical products and agriculture.

We do not even see any clear signs of real compliance with the commitments regarding standstill and rollback, although as far as the latter is concerned, we do acknowledge that the step recently taken by the Community, which we commend, goes very much in the right direction.

The success achieved at the Mid-Term Review gave our countries new reason for optimism, but that optimism has not been borne out by the results achieved to date.

The Republic of Costa Rica has recently acceded to the General Agreement: our delegation is naturally delighted at this accession and extends a very warm welcome to our organization to the Government of our fellow country. For a number of years, Costa Rica has been implementing extensive trade liberalization measures which certainly go far beyond what can be expected from a developing country. The commitments it has entered into as part of its accession to GATT testify to its adherence to the free-trade principles for which the General Agreement stands. The binding of nearly all its tariffs and the commitment agreed by Costa Rica to eliminate all import licences and quantitative restrictions are for many contracting parties, including developed ones, merely goals that must be pursued through the trade negotiations now taking place. And if to the above-mentioned developments we add the fact that Costa Rica's efforts are made within the climate of crisis and profound upheaval affecting Central America, and that in addition, the commitments undertaken by Costa Rica will necessarily be extended to the other Central American

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countries that have signed the regional integration agreements, it becomes quite easy to see that Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua have made a major and early contribution to the trade liberalization objectives set out in the Punta del Este Declaration. These countries expect at least equivalent benefits in return, in the form of the opening up of markets for their major export products by all developed countries.

There is a lot of talk about multilateralism in the international trading system, but unfortunately, we still can see that the major developed countries continue to rely on unilateralism to meet their particular interests. In addition, they use trade as an instrument of political pressure, both to reward those who exhibit what they think is "good behaviour", and to punish those countries that do not conform to their myopic perception of the world. The illegal and discriminatory measures adopted against Nicaragua in recent years are a glaring example of this attitude.

As my delegation said yesterday during the discussion of the Council's report, the trade embargo imposed against my country remains in force, despite having been declared illegal by the International Court of Justice and condemned by the international community. Only yesterday, as we were meeting at this forty-fifth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, the Second Committee of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the embargo - a resolution that will certainly be adopted by the General Assembly, as is the case every year.

One of the pillars of GATT is the dispute settlement system. In this area, we continue to see with deep concern that panel reports are not complied with, to the detriment of the contracting party against which a given measure was originally introduced. Strengthening this mechanism in order to ensure compliance with its decisions and, ultimately, withdrawal of the measures in question, should be a priority for the contracting parties.

As we enter this final stage of the multilateral negotiations, which should result in an international trading system that is more just and open, we appeal to all participants to redouble their efforts and their willingness to achieve the objectives set out at Punta del Este. This Round must not serve to reinforce inequality in the world. Mention has been made here of a number of achievements in the Round, and of the improvements in the multilateral trading system. We do indeed welcome these achievements, and draw strength and determination from them for the purpose of concluding the negotiations with results that meet the aspirations of all.