

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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## STATEMENT MADE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF URUGUAY ON 6 OCTOBER 1975

My delegation considers that there is no point in spending any more time analyzing the structure of the international bovine meat market and the problems which it raises, such as the direct or indirect impact of the obstacles to its progress and the disruptive practices by which it is beset.

Structure, problems, obstacles and practices are sufficiently familiar to all of us, though they are naturally viewed in a different light according to our different interests.

Our task is obviously to find some formula or working arrangement which will reconcile those interests, while conforming with the aims expressed in the Tokyo Declaration and remaining within the framework of the General Agreement, as it facilitates the achievement of such aims.

Consequently, in view of the critical situation prevailing in the international meat trade, we feel that this Sub-Group must now speed up its efforts to seek substantive solutions to these problems and draw up plans to deal with them both in the medium and in the long term.

In the view of my delegation, negotiations in this sector must be directed first of all to two aspects, in our opinion interrelated, namely, access to markets and the barriers represented by health regulations.

With regard to the latter, we consider that the existence of zones with different characteristics in the international meat market, while perhaps understandable and justifiable in days gone by, has now become an artificial phenomenon, since such characteristics are based on questionable factors whose discriminatory effects exercise a disturbing influence on other zones of the international market - as has already been pointed out - and also produce harmful effects in two ways, that is, directly and indirectly, on the economies of various developing countries which are heavily dependent on meat exports for maintaining the rhythm of their development.

We therefore consider highly important and appropriate, as we mentioned at the time, that the proposal put forward by the Community at our previous meeting that we should examine the question whether the health regulations at present in force in different countries comply with the provisions of Article XX of the General Agreement, or whether, under cover of a defective interpretation of those provisions -- as we understand has been suggested -- they involve an unjustified restriction on international trade.

The result of such an examination, the details of which could be settled by general agreement, could provide the basis for an approach, and this time a global approach, to the problem of access to markets, and facilitate the establishment of machinery to ensure such access on equitable terms for the benefit both of exporters and of importers.

In this connexion, I have great pleasure in drawing attention to the proposal put forward by the UNCTAD secretariat at the recent Rome meeting of FAO's Intergovernmental Meat Group, which contains concrete measures for beginning negotiations in the meat sector and includes as an essential part one of the proposals put forward by the Uruguayan delegation at the first meeting of the Agriculture Group, which involves a proportional system of self-supply.

We understand that the UNCTAD statement was circulated in the FAO group as an official document to all members of the group and we therefore consider it highly desirable that this Sub-Group on Meat should devote to these proposals and to specific elements of them, the attention which, in our opinion they merit.

Perhaps this is not the most appropriate time to examine the document I have referred to, since many delegations have no doubt only just received it and will therefore need a reasonable time to analyze it and decide what position they should take on its contents.

As far as my delegation is concerned, we should be satisfied if we could agree on a date in the near future when we could analyze this document thoroughly and at the same time consider other views on the subject of access to markets which have already been put forward, or may be put forward, by other delegations represented in this Sub-Group.

This may accordingly be a suitable moment for my delegation to add a few further details to the proposals I have mentioned.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, as we are aware that concrete solutions to the problems we have mentioned will involve lengthy discussions and negotiations, we take this opportunity to inform the Sub-Group of a proposal put forward by the Uruguayan delegation at the meeting of the FAO Intergovernmental Group to which I

have already referred, and which was supported by the meat exporting developing countries. The proposal appears in the final report adopted by the Group at its fifth meeting. It is a concrete proposal addressed to the EEC and runs as follows: In view of the necessity for the developing countries to achieve as a matter of urgency a solution to the problem of their meat exports, it is requested that the GATT quota for imports of chilled bovine meat should be substantially increased and that priority in distribution of the quota should be given to those countries which are traditionally suppliers of the EEC and whose economy has been most affected by the crisis in the meat market.

I must add to this proposal, to make it equitable, that the other importing countries whose health regulations impede access to their markets for meat from certain developing countries, should grant those countries benefits equivalent to those requested of the EEC, by adopting measures to facilitate exports to their markets of processed meat products not affected by health restrictions.

Mr. Chairman: It is now more than a year and a half since the most important meat importing market for my country was abruptly and unilaterally closed, thereby causing enormous damage to the economy of my country, at a time when it most needed the earnings obtained from its meat exports to counter the effect of the quadrupling of the cost of its oil imports. Far from improving - despite the adoption of specific measures of limited scope, the results of which, paradoxically, have benefited their proponents more than anyone else - the situation has deteriorated still further so far as my country is concerned, because of the subsidized exports now being made to markets which are accessible to efficient exporters like my country. Such action not only amounts to unfair competition but also, since it affects especially the developing countries, objectively considered, it amounts to unjustifiable economic aggression.

We consider, Mr. Chairman, that in view of the situation as I have described it, our two-fold request does not exceed the limits of what is fair and reasonable.