

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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ROMANIA

Statement by Mr. N. Andrei,
Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade
and International Economic Co-operation

First of all, I would like to associate myself with earlier speakers to congratulate you on the great responsibility that has been entrusted to you.

At the same time, I take this opportunity to express to the representatives of the host country the warm appreciation and gratitude of the Romanian delegation for the hospitable welcome and for the excellent conditions provided for the work of our meeting.

The launching of the Uruguay Round was decided upon in a context of serious economic problems, of instability and of deep imbalances in international trade relations.

Since then, the economic and trading environment has continued to deteriorate. We are still seeing recourse to protectionist measures that circumvent or even violate GATT provisions, the emergence of new tensions and a growing trend toward bilateralism, affecting the developing countries in particular.

These countries, which are finding their market access blocked by protectionist measures, are thus deprived of a vital source of income for carrying on their development process and servicing their external debt.

These developments are in sharp contrast to the commitments entered into at Punta del Este, particularly those on standstill and rollback.

In this context, I would like to emphasize that Romanian exports continue to be hampered by protectionist measures, often of a discriminatory character. These measures include recourse to non-economic criteria to justify the refusal to grant most-favoured-nation treatment or preferential treatment under the generalized system of preferences.

Romania has determined to play a substantial part in international trade, as one of the main lines of its overall economic policy.

Foreign trade plays a major rôle for achievement of our country's socio-economic development objectives and for narrowing the economic and technological gaps between us and the developed countries.

In order to pursue an economic policy geared to development and participate as actively as possible in the international economic system, my country has had to make great efforts in difficult circumstances due to the influence of the unfavourable international economic environment and to the strain on our resources caused by servicing of our external debt.

The achievement of an equitable multilateral trade system, based on improved and strengthened rules and disciplines, is consequently of vital concern to Romania, like other developing countries. Such a system should ensure stability, a wider perspective and the widest possible liberalization of trade in order to foster the economic advancement of all countries, and in particular the developing countries.

This review of the negotiations shows that encouraging progress has been made in some areas, as is confirmed by the reports on the work of the Negotiating Groups.

While expressing our satisfaction with the progress made so far, I would nevertheless like to recall, now that we are engaged in stocktaking, some concerns that have also been mentioned by a number of other delegations. They relate to a series of trends which we see as hampering the overall progress of the negotiations and which might even jeopardize the results.

Among these, I would like to mention the unsatisfactory course of the negotiations in areas of special interest for the developing countries, the tendency for advances in some areas of the Uruguay Round to be made conditional on progress in others, and the attempts to reinterpret some of the provisions of the Ministerial Declaration of Punta del Este, either to enlarge or to narrow the scope of the points agreed upon.

My delegation shares the view expressed by other speakers that our meeting is expected to show the political will of the participants to revitalize and advance the negotiating process by reaffirming their attachment to the spirit and the letter of the Punta del Este Declaration. In defining guidelines that can lead to balanced and mutually beneficial results in all areas of negotiation, we believe that it is necessary to take into consideration some fundamental requirements:

- strengthening the application of the basic principles of the General Agreement, such as non-discrimination and the granting of most-favoured-nation treatment unconditionally and on a stable basis;
- ensuring respect, in all areas of negotiation, for the legitimate national interests of the participants and the right of each country to independent and sovereign development;

- preserving the multilateral character of the negotiating process and of implementation of the results;
- improving the trading environment by taking account of the linkage between trade, money, finance and development;
- striving for full implementation of the standstill and rollback commitments on an m.f.n. and non-discriminatory basis;
- adopting concrete measures in all areas so as to ensure that differential and more favourable treatment is given to all the developing countries in the light of their interests and specific development needs.

In conclusion, allow me, Mr. Chairman, to emphasize that it is our common responsibility to contribute to building a new multilateral trading system for the decades to come. I firmly believe that if we act together, showing our political will, and bearing constantly in mind the shortcomings of the present system and the development needs of every country, we shall achieve our aim.