

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

MTN.TNC/MIN(88)/ST/15  
5 December 1988  
Special Distribution

Trade Negotiations Committee  
Meeting at Ministerial Level  
Montreal (Canada), December 1988

Original: English

ASEAN

Statement by Dr. Subin Pinkayan,  
Minister of Commerce of Thailand

I speak on behalf of the ASEAN contracting parties. Namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

The ASEAN countries have supported the launching of the Uruguay Round with the expectation that it would revitalize and strengthen the GATT system, improve world market access especially for the developing countries, resist protectionism and prevent recourse to unilateral actions. In other words, the Uruguay Round should bring about a strong and open multilateral trading system.

Two years after the launching of the Round, the international trading environment seems to have worsened. Despite the commitments on standstill and rollback undertaken at Punta del Este, the Surveillance Mechanism has failed to make any dent whatsoever in measures which are incompatible with GATT obligations. There is hardly any evidence to suggest that the rollback commitment has been implemented in any serious fashion. On the contrary, we have seen an increasing number of complaints against breaches of the standstill commitment. This unhealthy situation must be promptly corrected.

The issues of market access and fair trade competition are crucial to the development of the ASEAN economies. We mention two areas of specific concerns.

First, there has to be increased market access for Tropical Products. In these negotiations, ASEAN believes that unilateral trade liberalization measures taken by member countries should be given due recognition. Failure to achieve tangible results at Montreal and lack of serious and prompt efforts by the developed countries to implement them immediately would jeopardize the credibility of the Uruguay Round. Doubts would be raised on whether the developing countries would be deriving substantive benefits from the Round after all, despite the special attention accorded at Punta del Este to this area.

. / .

Second, there has to be substantive progress in the negotiations on agriculture. Otherwise, it would be doubtful if we could continue to secure the momentum of the Round. A lack of credible results at Montreal could have serious implications on the overall process of the negotiations. It would lead to further deterioration in the world agricultural trade situation. In ASEAN's view, the Cairns Group's proposal has taken into account the interests and concerns of all trading partners. It could contribute to the resolution of the differences particularly between the major trading partners and provide a basis for negotiations post-Montreal.

Among the new issues, TRIPs and TRIMs are sensitive areas. As they will impinge on the social and economic development of the developing countries, the negotiations should acknowledge and take into account the legitimate concerns of the developing countries, and recognize the competence and rôle of other relevant international organizations in such issues as intellectual property rights. This will facilitate progress in these areas and encourage wider participation by the developing countries.

ASEAN supported the inclusion of Services in the Uruguay Round, in the expectation that the negotiations would establish ground rules on the conduct of trade in services. This is a new complex issue. Sound trading rules can provide a stable and predictable trading environment and foster an expansion of trade in services. These new rules must take full account of the non-economic national policy objectives of the developing countries, as well as their economic aspirations to develop their services sectors rapidly and compete in the world market.

To sum up, the ASEAN countries hope that the outcome of the Uruguay Round would strengthen the multilateral trading system and provide increased market access, to the benefit of participants. We cannot afford any more unilateral actions or bilateralism.

ASEAN therefore calls upon the industrialized trading nations to move forward constructively, find common ground with all participants, and ensure the success of the Uruguay Round. ASEAN hopes this process will take into account its basic interests. The negotiations should acknowledge the development needs and economic and social constraints of the developing countries, and abide by the principle of special and differential treatment for them. The ASEAN countries are ready to play their part in contributing towards the success of the Uruguay Round.