

MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND

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Trade Negotiations Committee

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LUXEMBOURG

Statement by Mr. Robert Goebbels,  
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,  
Foreign Trade and Co-operation

At Punta del Este, my country expressed its readiness to participate fully in balanced negotiations which would benefit all the contracting parties and ensure for our common prosperity in the future the necessary expansion of trade in a context of security and freedom.

On the occasion of this Mid-Term Review meeting, while there has been unquestionable progress in certain areas, my delegation is ready to confirm its commitment, in the belief that, with the co-operation of all, the overriding objective, namely the success of the Uruguay Round, will be achieved within the limits set by the Punta del Este Conference.

Although the Punta del Este agreements were designed to reduce and ultimately eliminate imbalances between trading and economic partners, it must nonetheless be noted that certain imbalances have continued to increase, creating tensions which, in the long term, will be prejudicial to all.

The Uruguay Round must remain a collective undertaking. It is a common process in which all participants must necessarily contribute according to their means and possibilities, assume their share of responsibilities and be entitled to a fair share of the benefits.

This necessarily implies rethinking our relations with our partners in the South.

The industrialized countries, by reason of their economic weight, too often tend to envisage a world that would be governed by rules which suit their interests.

We must not forget that, today, 85 per cent of the world's wealth is concentrated in the hands of some 15 per cent of the world population. Such a blatant imbalance is hardly conducive to growth in a climate of stability or to the attainment of the prosperity to which we all aspire.

In a world so interdependent as ours, long-term growth for all can only be achieved by common endeavour. This implies, amongst other things, that the industrialized countries must make a more effective contribution to solving the problems of development and that a solution must be found to the debt problem. At the same time, developing countries must also pursue their policy of economic improvement to provide a sound economic basis for their development.

In this context, effective access by developing countries to the markets of the richer countries is of paramount importance.

For its part, Luxembourg is convinced that if we widen access to our markets, the developing countries will become competitive partners able to take responsibility for their own growth thereby contributing to overall economic growth.

In this perspective which aims to be a constructive one, there is no question of throwing doubt on the present provisions of the GATT agreements, which were designed to accompany, not block, the development of the countries of the South. On the contrary, full use should be made of those provisions to enable developing countries gradually to take on their obligations and to exercise their rights fully.

This, in the view of my delegation, is what is really at stake in the current discussion concerning the participation of developing countries in the Uruguay Round negotiations, that is, the part that they will have to play in achieving the objectives of the Round, but also their share of the responsibility in implementing the results in order to achieve an economic environment acceptable to all.

As a member of the European Community, Luxembourg expresses the hope that its partners in the developing world, who are participating in this Mid-Term Review in Montreal, will be able to accept the proposals for balanced and fair solutions concerning issues which are of immediate interest to the countries of the North, even if they appear to be less urgent for the countries of the South, in particular such areas as services and intellectual property which are economic sectors that determine the transformation of our societies and pave the way for the post-industrial era.

By the same token, it is only right that, for issues which are of vital and immediate interest for developing countries, all participants in this Montreal meeting should be ready to subscribe to reasonable solutions proposed in specific areas such as tropical products, trade in textiles and clothing or trade in agricultural products.

Our world is such that we all need each other. The corollaries of interdependence are solidarity and mutual assistance. Such is the price of progress.

The Luxembourg delegation wished briefly to express its convictions and hopes on the occasion of this Mid-Term Review meeting which, in the next two years, should lead us to success in the Uruguay Round negotiations.