

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

MIN.TNC/MIN(88)/ST/33
6 December 1988
Special Distribution

Trade Negotiations Committee

Original: French

Meeting at Ministerial Level
Montreal (Canada), December 1988

AFRICAN STATEMENT

Presented by H.E. Mr. Nicolas KOUANDI ANGBA, Minister for Trade
of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and spokesman
for the African countries participating in the GATT
Montreal Ministerial Meeting on 6 December 1988.

On behalf of my colleagues, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of African countries who have asked me to express our common concerns to this Conference, I should like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election which, I am sure, augurs well for the work of our meeting and its successful outcome.

At the same time I should like to associate myself with all the previous speakers who have thanked the Canadian Government for the excellent welcome extended to us, as well as the Director-General of GATT, Mr. Arthur Dunkel, and his staff for the flawless organisation of our work.

When adopting the Punta del Este Declaration, the African countries participating in the multilateral trade negotiations agreed to embark upon the irreversible liberalization of international trade.

That liberalization is a tremendous collective endeavour to which Africa is resolved to make its contribution.

However, in the view the African participating countries, for that liberalization to benefit all parties, large or small, rich or poor, presupposes the following:

- due regard for the Punta del Este Ministerial Declaration;
- political will on all sides to achieve balanced results.

The African participating countries, while welcoming the praiseworthy efforts of the major trading nations during these first two years, therefore wish, like other regional groups, to state their main concerns in a responsible manner.

Far from representing an acknowledgment of failure in what has been accomplished so far, these concerns rather reflect their abiding determination to comply with the spirit and letter of the Punta del Este Declaration.

Thus, at a meeting on 4 December 1988 in the Montreal Palais des Congrès, the African participating countries, following a thorough examination of their principal interests and in the light of the approaches adopted in the various sectors of interest to Africa, adopted the following statement, which I have the great honour to present to the Trade Negotiations Committee on their behalf.

1. The African countries participating in the Uruguay Round, Meeting in Montreal in the context of the Trade Negotiations Committee, reaffirm their commitment to the Punta del Este Declaration and express their hopes for a successful outcome of this Round for the world economy as a whole and for sustained growth and expansion of international trade.

They stress the importance that the Round ensure benefits for all participants.

2. In this spirit, the African participating countries have engaged actively in the negotiations over the past two years and will continue to do so in the future, co-operating with others to bring the Round to the ultimate successful end.

They therefore attach particular importance to the outcome of this present session of the Trade Negotiations Committee.

3. The African participating countries recall the Ministerial Declarations of 1982 and 1986; they draw attention to the seriousness of the critical situation of their economies, which is underscored by the international community through the adoption of the United Nations Programme for African Economy Recovery and Development.

It is to be recalled that:

1. Africa remains the least developed continent, with the majority of the least developed countries;
2. The African economies have basic structural deficiencies;
3. The debt crisis has laid a heavy strain on the ability of the African countries' economies to recover and develop;
4. The African countries depend on one or a few export commodities and suffer from the deterioration of the terms of trade which has worsened their economic situation even further.

4. For these reasons and many others, the African participating countries call for urgent, concrete solutions to this situation in the consideration of the various aspects in the negotiations, and particularly in the areas of Tropical Products, Agriculture, Textiles and Natural Resource-Based Products.

5. The African countries have serious reasons for concern; in the majority of the Negotiating Groups their interests do not seem to have been adequately taken into account in the past two years.

6. They therefore urge:

- Reaffirmation of the standstill and rollback commitments;
- Due regard for the principle of special, differential and more favourable treatment in favour of developing countries as enshrined in the GATT and reaffirmed by the Punta del Este Declaration;
- Full recognition of the applicability of paragraph B-7 of the Punta del Este Declaration to a large number of African countries, and implementation of that paragraph;
- Improved market access for products identified as being of interest to African countries;
- Advance implementation of all Uruguay Round agreements obtained mid-way in favour of developing country exports;
- Preservation of the acquired rights of certain African countries under existing preferential arrangements and the taking of adequate steps to redress the negative effects resulting from liberalization measures;
- Clear recognition of the specific character of agriculture in African countries and the importance of agricultural production and trade in their development process. Due account should also be taken of the problems of countries that are net importers of agricultural foodstuffs.
- That in the various offers the liberalization efforts undertaken by African countries under structural adjustment programmes be taken into account;
- That the negotiations on the functioning of the GATT system take seriously into account the linkage between trade, money, finance and development, and that a concrete solution be rapidly adopted,

Finally, the Trade Negotiations Committee should ensure that these recommendations are effectively taken into account, in order to respect the spirit and provisions of the Punta del Este Declaration.

That is the content of the statement which it was my duty to bring to the attention of the Conference. Thank you.