

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION

Statement by the Secretary-General  
Read by Mr. Jean Ripert, Director-General for  
Development and International Economic Co-operation

I would have been happy to be among you today especially as you are meeting in Canada, which plays such a constructive rôle on issues of international co-operation. Unfortunately, developments in the General Assembly retain me in New York. However, I should like through this message to underline the importance which we at the United Nations attach to the success of your meeting.

The international political climate has improved noticeably this year. There has been significant progress on the settlement of regional conflicts as well as on disarmament. There is a new will to seek accommodation on some of the most serious political issues of importance to the world community.

From an equally political point of view, I cannot hide my deep concern about certain aspects of the international economic situation which threaten to destabilize large parts of the developing world. I think especially about many indebted countries where the political agenda is dominated by economic difficulties sometimes reaching an emergency level. A priority objective of the international community should be to help them remobilize their natural and human resources into a process of growth and development. The task requires structural adjustment in all countries, including industrial countries, including industrial countries, as well as strengthened international co-operation in finance and trade. In any event it cannot be achieved without a predictable and open trade framework.

Success in your deliberations is also of great importance to the industrial countries themselves whose economies are growingly interdependent with the rest of the world.

These concerns were prominent when the objective of the Round established at Punta del Este. That is the reinvigoration of a more open trading system based on multilaterally agreed GATT rules to promote growth and development. However, since then there has been no marked improvement in the situation. Indeed the Director-General, Mr. Dunkel, has repeatedly drawn attention to the aggravation of trade barriers.

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I am aware of the difficulties that are inherent in the heavy and complex agenda ahead of you. I am also mindful of the need for parallel strengthening in the co-ordination of economic policies among the advanced economies to bring about greater stability in the global economy. It is moreover necessary to act innovatively and indeed urgently on the debt and financial issues. But there is no substitute to success in your endeavour.

With that in mind, I would like to mention four key points on which, in my opinion, a renewed commitment to progress is especially important at this meeting.

Firstly, implementation of the standstill and rollback commitments, together with a more efficient system of safeguards and dispute settlement, would revive faith in the rules of GATT.

Secondly, one of the important attributes of the current Round is the prominent place accorded to agriculture. A compromise that supports the reform of domestic farm policies in developed countries as a step towards trade liberalization would be beneficial to all countries.

Thirdly, concrete measures on tropical products and other related goods would aid export growth and diversification in developing countries, especially the low-income among them. Despite the recent strengthening in some commodity prices, the present situation for these products is poor, and the outlook continues to be unfavourable. The General Assembly, recently reviewing the African situation, was insistent in calling for measures to overcome the difficult commodity situation in Africa.

Fourthly, textiles and clothing, which are important for many developing countries, should be brought back under GATT rules.

The Uruguay Round is also concerned with a number of "new" areas such as services, and intellectual property, whose importance is dramatically increasing. On these and other issues account should be taken of the vital ongoing contribution of various parts of the United Nations system, especially UNCTAD. I would like to pledge the continued co-operation of the United Nations system organizations to your efforts.

Let me conclude in appealing to all participants to bring these deliberations to a constructive end, thus bringing the Round to a successful conclusion in 1990.