

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Statement by Mr. K.K.S. Dadzie  
Secretary-General

It is a privilege for me to address this important meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee, at which Ministers will be taking decisions aimed at accelerating progress toward the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Punta del Este Declaration. The international trading community will be awaiting a successful outcome of this meeting, which should reaffirm the commitment of governments participating in the Uruguay Round to the multilateral trading system and to the multilateral negotiating process.

All States have an interest in building a more open, viable and durable trading system, one which is also more universal and dynamic. This meeting should provide the political impetus required to move towards this objective. As recognized in the Final Act of UNCTAD VII, a balanced outcome fully accommodating the priorities and objectives of the developing countries, is essential if the trading system is to sustain growth and development. In this context, the momentum toward trade liberalization can only be preserved through scrupulous adherence to the standstill and rollback commitments, combined with the adoption of imaginative and realistic negotiating mechanisms, which take account of each country's capacity to contribute. Improved access for products and sectors of interest to developing countries should accordingly be given priority, particularly where barriers to their trade have largely resisted previous attempts at liberalization, or where access to markets has been frustrated by intensified trade-restrictive and trade-distorting measures. There is a notable need for action with respect to agricultural, tropical and natural resource-based products, as well as safeguards, textiles and clothing. In this respect, the efforts already extended during the meeting to achieve concrete results in the priority area of tropical products are to be commended.

Security of access to markets is a matter of crucial importance for developing countries and for weaker trading partners in general. The Uruguay Round could make a major contribution to this objective by strengthening the multilateral framework of rules and principles so as to support governments in their resolve to resist pressures for protectionist

and discriminatory trade measures. This would assist governments in ensuring a more faithful reflection of multilateral commitments in domestic trade laws and regulations and in demonstrating a more pronounced readiness to accept the decisions emerging from multilateral dispute settlement mechanisms.

The Uruguay Round also provides a major opportunity to more fully incorporate the development objective within the framework of the multilateral trading system. Over the forty-year history of the GATT, the contracting parties have attempted to adapt its rules and principles to more effectively support the development process. Developing countries have, however, felt that these efforts have been inadequate. The Tokyo Round legitimized the extension of differential and more-favourable treatment in favour of developing countries. Given the specific thrust of the mandates given to the various negotiating groups and the active rôle of developing countries, the Uruguay Round should be able to go beyond the concept of differential treatment and to devise more precise development orientations for the instruments and commitments which will emerge in each area. The importance of such orientations was reaffirmed last year when UNCTAD VII agreed on the need to improve the systems which underpin international economic relations, including the trading system, so as to make them more supportive of development.

The development objective is not a slogan. Its acceptance and its translation into operational commitments are pre-requisites for success in the negotiations. Moreover, the Uruguay Round, unlike earlier multilateral trade negotiations, is dealing with a number of vital strategic issues - including the so-called "new issues" - which have far-reaching implications for the capacity of developing countries to compete effectively in world trade and to achieve national development objectives.

If the Uruguay Round is to contribute to sustained growth and development, complementary and supportive action will have to be taken in areas outside its scope. As was stressed by the Final Act of UNCTAD VII, a stable and supportive international economic environment is essential for the smooth functioning of the international trading system. In this context, a durable solution to the debt problem is of primary importance; so too is action to strengthen the international commodity economy. Better access to technology and reduction of restrictive business practices should go hand-in-hand with action towards a more open trading system. Work in these areas within UNCTAD, whose mandate covers all trade flows as well as a wide range of other inter-disciplinary development issues, can be supportive of the Uruguay Round.

Within the scope of the Round, the UNCTAD Secretariat has responded positively to requests to contribute to the provision of technical support to the negotiating process. In particular, its work in the field of services, focussing on the relationship between services and development, is directly relevant to the establishment of the multilateral framework on trade in services foreseen in Part II of the Punta del Este Declaration.

Further, the Secretariat has provided technical assistance to developing countries to facilitate their effective participation in the negotiations, an essential ingredient of a balanced and durable outcome. We are particularly grateful for the support we have received from the United Nations Development Programme, which has permitted a comprehensive technical assistance programme to be put in place.

May I end by commending the Government of Canada for their initiative in hosting this meeting and the authorities and citizens of Montreal and the province of Québec for the hospitality they have extended to us during our stay in this gracious city.