

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Trade Negotiations Committee

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Meeting at Ministerial Level
Montreal (Canada), December 1988

SPAIN

Statement by Mr. Apolonio Ruiz Ligerio
Secretary of State for Trade

We find ourselves today in Montreal, in this great country of Canada, and my first words must be of gratitude and appreciation to the Canadian authorities, and especially to Minister Crosbie, for having made available all the facilities necessary for the success of this meeting. I hope and trust that we shall achieve results as impressive as those obtained at Punta del Este under the guidance of my good friend, Enrique Iglesias.

The purpose of the meeting is clear: to review the progress made in the multilateral trade negotiations launched by the Declaration of Punta del Este to which we subscribed two years ago. Through this Mid-Term Review, we shall be able to redouble our efforts to obtain the best possible results, in other words those which will really be within our reach if we lay aside Utopian aims, so as to adapt the multilateral international rules that govern trade to the prevailing world situation and environment.

The General Agreement and the instruments created by it, i.e. GATT, have demonstrated their pragmatic effectiveness in adapting to reality for forty years. As is to be expected, the world has evolved during this period, economic and trade relations among the countries that constitute the international community have changed and the GATT rules must therefore be adjusted to the prevailing situation.

For my country, the conditions of participation in this eighth Round are new. After taking part in the Dillon, Kennedy and Tokyo Rounds in an individual capacity, Spain is participating in this new Round, the Uruguay Round, which marks the fortieth anniversary of GATT, as a member of the European Economic Community. Accordingly my country's position on each and every one of the problems has already been set forth clearly in the statements made earlier at this meeting by the Presidency of the Council of the Community and by the Commission.

The Spanish economy is engaged in a general process of opening, which we believe is bound to strengthen it. To that end, and in addition to the commitments undertaken under Spain's treaty of accession to the EEC, it will implement the results which I hope will be attained by the close of

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this Round and will participate in autonomous action by the EEC itself to create a vast single market subject to the laws of competition. All this undoubtedly entails an effort and the acceptance of further sacrifices but we firmly believe that in the long run the effect will be highly positive and conducive to an economy that is more closely and effectively integrated in the international context.

To turn to one of the various problems confronting us in this Round of negotiations, I have been gratified to see the progress made in the area of tropical products which was given priority status at Punta del Este and which is not linked to or dependent upon the achievement of solutions in other areas. The greatest effort must be made with respect to those tropical products that have a decisive incidence on international trade in such products. At the same time it is very important to move further forward as regards the granting of special concessions to the least-developed countries.

In my opinion, we could progress fairly rapidly on legal and procedural problems or aspects provided that we maintain a realistic approach, we do not try to transform the Agreement into a jurisdictional body and we do not pretend that practices outside the GATT rules will be eliminated simply by condemning them. Let us rather focus our imagination on creating conditions that will do away with the reasons behind the adoption of solutions that are so far from being multilateral.

A new area that is certain to become increasingly important in coming decades impels us to look for solutions without delay. I refer to the trade-related aspects of intellectual property and to trade in services. I sincerely believe that it is incumbent upon us to devise international multilateral rules to regulate these two important areas as far as possible; but at the same time I am convinced that however well we may do this now, we shall merely be laying the foundations and establishing basic rules which it will be then possible to improve, supplement and update in the light of experience acquired in GATT in the years to come, as has been the case over the last forty years for the provisions established in 1948.

The timing and venue of this Montreal meeting are highly sensitive. We have to lay the bases for improving the rules and by thus paving the way for greater and more effective development of international trade relations, fostering the development of all the peoples of the world.

My country, which has such close spiritual and intellectual ties with this continent, is disturbed by the dramatic economic situation of numerous Latin American countries. The heavy indebtedness of many of these countries and their need to play a more important part in international trade in order to deal with the problem is a matter of serious concern to us. They may rest assured that Spain will spare no effort to ensure that, in the context of the EEC, the endeavours made to overcome the problems of those countries will be fruitful.

Spain is aware of the close relationship between the degree of indebtedness and the fruitful expansion of international trade. Co-ordinated progress must be made on all these aspects, the developing countries must gain access to international markets, and at the same time all the barriers that impede such access must be progressively eliminated.

In looking at the work being done at this conference, I feel sure that we shall achieve the most positive results and progress possible, so that the necessary rules can be established to promote the harmonious development of all the countries of the international community to the benefit of all peoples.