

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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NEGOTIATING GROUP ON AGRICULTURE
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Special and Differential Treatment
for Developing Countries

Statement by Colombia

According to the TNC's decision of April this year, in the agricultural reform process aimed at liberalizing trade in agriculture, "the particular needs and conditions of developing countries should be taken into account at all stages of the negotiation in conformity with the principle of special and differential treatment to developing countries as laid down in the Punta del Este Declaration". Furthermore, "government measures on assistance, whether direct or indirect, to encourage agricultural and rural development are an integral part of the development programmes of developing countries".

In addition, the Cairns Group Ministerial Statements of Budapest and Waitangi indicated that the modalities of application of differential and more favourable treatment for developing countries should be specified.

Consequently, and bearing in mind that at the GNG and TNC meetings in July 1989 it was stated that participants should express their positions on each of the subjects by December 1989 if possible, Colombia feels that the time has come to express its preliminary views, as Brazil has done, on some of the points which it feels the agricultural reform process should include, in particular with respect to the specific situation of developing countries.

Thus, for the time being it wishes to put forward some initial ideas to help to specify the particular modalities for the implementation of the special and differential treatment for developing countries. These are ideas on which Colombia has been working systematically together with other member countries of the Cairns Group.

While it is true that a consensus exists under the April decision to accept the compromise to establish a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system, it is likewise true that the consensus also exists with regard to taking account of the particular needs and conditions of developing countries in that reform process. Colombia therefore considers that there are two basic principles that should be applied in favour of developing countries, namely:

- longer periods for the implementation of commitments;

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- flexibility in the implementation of commitments.

In addition, and as provided for in the second indent of paragraph 8 of the April 1989 TNC decision to the effect that "government measures on assistance, whether direct or indirect, to encourage agricultural and rural development" constitute measures taken by developing countries that are crucial and vitally important for their economic and social development, Colombia also believes that, inter alia, measures such as those aimed at the basic development of infrastructure, physical support and facilities for storage of agricultural products, for research and development, training and development of human resources, and interest concessions, should not be included among the measures of support of developing countries and, therefore, do not have to be negotiated by them.

For the same reason, as and when agreement is reached on the use of a Global Measurement of Support in the negotiations, these measures should also be excluded from the relevant calculations in the case of developing countries.

As far as access measures are concerned, it is important to establish a link between the opening up of markets by developing countries and the opening up of markets for those countries in the developed countries; thus, the degree of openness of developing country markets should be determined by the time-span in which the markets of particular export interest to those countries will be opened up in developed countries.

With regard to sanitary and phytosanitary measures, one of the main objectives at all times must be the elimination of such measures as means of discrimination against developing countries, by making them stricter for those countries and thus closing off their access to markets and distorting agricultural trade. Finally, besides longer periods for the implementation of such measures when agreed, it is also important that when such measures are applied restrictively, without scientific evidence or basis, to products originating in developing countries, the latter should be entitled to compensation for the ensuing injury or reduction or loss of markets.

It is also most important to recognize the efforts being made by developing countries to maintain pest-free and disease-free areas or zones: procedures should therefore be established for recognizing them.

As stated in Section C, paragraph 6, of the April decision, all this must be accompanied by the necessary technical assistance, which could take the form inter alia of credits, grants, training and equipment, and exchange of experience, to help them to adjust to and match the sanitary and phytosanitary requirements in their export markets.

As for the net food importing developing countries, their needs should be taken into account and the steps to be taken both in GATT and in the relevant international organizations should be explored.

These are preliminary ideas which Colombia hopes will help to advance the discussions. They have been expressed without prejudice to any subsequent development of these and other ideas Colombia expects to submit in future.