

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES AT THE
TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE URUGUAY ROUND

Geneva, 10 April 1990

1. The African countries share the general concern expressed in the statement of the informal group of developing countries. While recalling the African Statement made in the Montreal Mid-Term Review Meeting in December 1988, this statement is intended to stress the issues that are of particular interest to African participating countries.
2. When adopting the Punta del Este Declaration, the African countries participating in the Uruguay Round multilateral trade negotiations expected that the negotiations would contribute to enable them to take effective part in international trade and promote their economic growth and development. The process of liberalization is a tremendous collective endeavour to which Africa is resolved to make its contribution within its limited capacity. However, in the view of the African participating countries, for that liberalization to benefit all parties, large or small, rich or poor, presupposes the following:
 - (i) Respect of the elements contained in the Punta del Este Ministerial Declaration;
 - (ii) Political will on all sides to achieve balanced results.
3. African countries participants have been negotiating in the Uruguay Round constructively and in good faith; they are prepared to continue to do so in the coming months in order to contribute to the success of the Round. However, after assessing the state of the negotiations, African countries note with deep concern the current lack of balance in the negotiations.
4. Proposals and initiatives advanced in the various negotiating groups after the Montreal Mid-Term Review Meeting have the effect of depriving them of their rights under the GATT, and imposing at them obligations in disregard of their special needs and conditions, including those of least-developed countries in contravention of the commitment undertaken at Punta del Este for a balanced outcome of the negotiations. This attitude

has the potential to undermine the fundamental interests of African countries participants in the Round and is not acceptable to them. We feel constrained to point out, now, late as the hour is, to bring about a reorientation of the substantive negotiations in order to ensure that the Uruguay Round remains as meaningful to us as was originally intended in the Punta del Este Declaration.

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 three and a half years. Having regard to the structural handicaps and vulnerability of their economies to the external environment;

They therefore urge:

- (i) Full recognition of the applicability of paragraph B.(iv) to (vii) of the Punta del Este Declaration to African countries, and implementation of that paragraph;
- (ii) Uninhibited market access for products of interest to African countries to enable these countries to produce results in their current enormous efforts to carry out sustainable structural reconstruction of their respective economies;
- (iii) Preservation of the acquired rights of African countries under existing preferential arrangements and the taking of adequate steps to redress the negative effects resulting from liberalization measures;
- (iv) Participation of African countries in the negotiations on tariffs and NTMs, tropical products and NRBP's regardless of their contributions;
- (v) Clear recognition of the specific character of agriculture beset by complex structural constraints 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 African countries that are net food importers in order to enable them to meet high prices of food imports and the growth of domestic food production.

6. With regard to the new issues African countries oppose the general tendency of diverting from the original mandate of the negotiations and the total disregard of developmental concerns. In these areas we need to retain flexibility to ensure developmental, technological and public policy objectives.

7. Regarding systemic issues we can deal with them once we feel reassured that our concerns are reflected in the final results of the relevant negotiating groups.

8. In conclusion, the African countries, while reaffirming their commitment to the Punta del Este Declaration, urge all participants to recognize the gravity of their present situation and to negotiate with renewed intent to implement the Punta del Este Declaration.