

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Trade Negotiations Committee

STATEMENT BY BANGLADESH ON  
BEHALF OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Geneva, 24 July 1990

That the Chairpersons of the different Negotiating Groups, despite admirable efforts made by them, had to present to this meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee status reports rather than the targeted profiles of a package of agreements in all areas of the negotiations, measures the gap between expectations and achievements, and underlines the work that lies ahead to be completed during the remaining 13 to 15 working weeks of the 220 weeks that the Ministers at Punta del Este gave to the participants to the Round to come up with the results of their negotiations. Expressions of concerns, anxieties or disappointments by participants to this meeting, therefore, are natural. In view of the fact that the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries is scheduled to take place in Paris from 3-14 September 1990, the least developed countries were particularly looking forward to profiles which would have provided for unrestricted access to markets for their products, while providing for necessary measures supportive of enhancing production as well as productivity of the least developed countries' economies. Our share of disappointment, therefore, could hardly be less.

However, the contribution of this meeting would be measures by the positive outcome that could be extracted out of the assessment made by the participants by way of clearly delineating blockages in all areas of the negotiations for tackling in the coming weeks, with a view to accomplishing the objectives and mandates of the Punta del Este Declaration. My delegation, therefore, would earnestly urge upon all to make equitable contributions to this end.

Some of the major stumbling blocks, in the perception of the least developed country delegations, are:

- short-fall in the expected implementation of standstill and rollback commitments;
- fear of continued sapping of the MFN principle through selectivity and discrimination;
- tendency towards carving out trading blocks at the cost of global free trade;

- inadequate commitments by participants to liberalize access to markets;
- predominance of inertia of attitude in respect of the Multifibre Arrangement and lack of demonstratively serious endeavour on the part of major importing countries to integrate the textiles and clothing régime into GATT;
- apprehension of upsetting the existing balance in the rule making areas and the establishment of imbalanced arrangements in the new areas of negotiations;
- efforts to establish linkages amongst various Negotiating Groups and make progress in one Group hostage to the lack of progress in another Group.

While we recognize that for furthering the pace of progress in the negotiations, removal of these blocks should engage priority attention of important actors, I should at the same time like to invite attention to the concerns of the least developed countries on whose behalf my delegation, as it may kindly be recalled, submitted proposals to different Negotiating Groups. Some of the core elements of the proposals are:

- elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers to products of actual and/or potential export interest to least developed countries including all industrial products, in particular textiles and clothing, artisanal, tropical, agricultural and natural resource-based products;
- advanced and accelerated implementation in favour of the least developed countries of all concessions negotiated in the framework of the Uruguay Round, without asking any reciprocity whatsoever from the least developed countries or any other conditionality;
- provision of special flexibility in rules of origin in the case of least developed countries' exports;
- special treatment for the least developed countries in the areas of tropical and other products of special interest to them;
- appropriate compensation to the least developed countries for continuing erosion in the margin of preferences enjoyed by them under GSP and other preferential régimes due to the progressive elimination or reduction of m.f.n. tariffs on products of export interest to the least developed countries;
- adoption of complementary measures by contracting parties to broaden the production and export bases of the least developed countries;

- further improvement of GSP schemes by, inter alia, enlarging the coverage to include all least developed countries, expanding the range of products, deepening tariff cuts, exemption from quotas or ceilings and long-term guaranteed maintenance of GSP commitments;
- further efforts by preference-giving countries to simplify procedures and assist least developed countries to take full advantage of GSP facilities;
- in any arrangement in the agricultural area for bringing about reforms and new disciplines, keeping in view the development dimension of the least developed countries and providing for adequate food aid to offset the likely erosion in the least developed countries' purchasing power of food as well as direct financial and technical assistance for development of their agricultural sector;
- in any arrangement in the new areas (trade-related intellectual property rights, trade-related investment measures, and trade in services), keeping in view the development dimension of the least developed countries and their access to needed technologies, through the instrumentality of national policies and legislations;
- in any framework agreement or arrangement on trade in services, special provision for unhindered movements of and temporary residence for the least developed countries' skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled service providers into the markets of service consumers, as well as provision for technical and financial assistance to the least developed countries for broadening production and export bases of their service sectors. Further, that the least developed countries' stage of development and particular problems would not enable them to take any initial commitments in the services framework needs to be recognized.

We maintain that making any contributions by the Least Developed Countries is inconsistent with their development, financial and trade needs, and, therefore, these countries should not be required to make any concessions in the course of the negotiations. But procedures established for negotiating concessions in the Negotiating Groups on Tariffs, Non-Tariff Measures and Tropical Products, without any exception, call for submission of offers followed by submission of request lists. Consequently neither were we enabled to submit our request lists, not participate in the crucial phase of negotiations in these negotiating groups. We do not even have the means to know if some participants have already indicated their willingness to grant special concessions to the least developed countries. Under the circumstances, as part of according special treatment to the least developed countries, we expect flexibility in the procedures established so that the interests of the least developed countries, as

outlined in their submissions (and further developed subsequently), can be fully taken into account in the negotiated results of these groups. The prospect of eradicating their under-development is likely to be more in sight if the least developed countries, inter alia, are allowed full market access globally without placing any reciprocal demand on them and this, as a matter of right, be enshrined in the GATT.

The least developed countries, which are net food importers, are going to be adversely affected, at least in the short run, by the reform process in the agriculture sector. The shape and content of the envisaged food aid package to compensate erosion in their purchasing power of food is, therefore, of utmost concern to them. In this context, we urge upon the participants to work-out, as an integral part of the agriculture reform programme, details of the food aid package, including, inter alia, identification of source, contributing to the pool of food aid and institutional arrangements for effectively reaching food aid to the adversely affected countries.

We also like to submit that in the negotiation on agriculture, the least developed countries should not be required to shoulder any obligations which would thwart their development efforts and that the least developed countries would require to be exempted from the requirements of making submissions, particularly those stipulated in paragraphs 6, 12, 19 and 20 of the Chairman's text (MTN.GNG/NG5/W/170, dated 11 July 1990).

Before concluding, I would like to plead with the participants to consider how to institutionalize provisions of special treatment for the least developed countries that the participants to the Round are expected to agree upon.