

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Secretary-General

The Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations has been the most ambitious and complex undertaking of its kind, qualitatively different from its predecessors. It has reached up to and beyond the frontiers of trade policy. The difficulty of isolating trade-related aspects of investment and technology policies has provided further proof, if it were needed, of the interdependence of different policy areas and the need for a coherent approach to them in an integrated framework.

The next few days will see the fruition of the hard work of many people over four years, not least that of my colleague, Mr. Arthur Dunkel, to whom warm tribute is due for his perseverance. Compromises must be made to achieve a balanced outcome, in which all parties can see their interests reflected. Statesmanship must ensure that all parties are enabled to adopt their positions on the final package in all lucidity.

The main effect of the eagerly-awaited outcome of the Uruguay Round should be to strengthen and revitalize the multilateral trading system. The dual challenge is to attract the full adherence of the stronger trading partners, whose autonomous actions can undermine the system, and to make the system more responsive to the needs of weaker trading partners.

Among the latter, developing countries expect that the implementation of the results of the Uruguay Round will give full effect to its "development objective". If these countries are to expand their trade on the basis of competitive export sectors and to participate in the trading system with greater confidence, they need firm support for their national development efforts and elbow-room to pursue them, without fear of retaliation or discrimination. They seek enhanced access not only to markets but also to foreign capital and technology, so as to upgrade their own infrastructures and technological capacities.

A positive outcome from the Uruguay Round should strike a decisive blow against protectionism and possible fragmentation of the trading system, and it will counter recessionary tendencies in the world economy. If this thrust is to benefit all countries, it must be complemented by action against other barriers to development, notably the debt burden, the

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weakness of commodity markets and inadequate food security. Looking beyond the Round, one can see a new generation of issues emerging from the ever-closer intertwining of trade, technology and finance and their interaction with the natural environment. In particular, the globalization of corporate activity heightens the need for international co-operative arrangements to ensure that corporate dynamics generate genuine competition, improve the dissemination and absorption of environmentally-sound technologies, and work responsibly for the benefit of sustainable development in all countries. This agenda for the 1990s will need to be pursued in a coherent conceptual and institutional framework, under the auspices of the United Nations.

UNCTAD is available to play its full part in this next chapter in international economic co-operation. The eighth session of the Conference next year will address the challenges and potentials of trade expansion and sustainable development in the interdependent world of the 1990s. Taking place in Punta del Este exactly five years after the Uruguay Round was launched there, UNCTAD VIII will provide governments with an occasion for undertaking, among other tasks, an assessment of the Round and a definition of the next steps forward.

For its part, the UNCTAD Secretariat, working in close association with the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations and other elements of the United Nations, can help to bring a development perspective to bear on a wide range of economic policy issues. In this context, the Secretariat has been privileged to contribute directly to the multilateral trade negotiations through a comprehensive programme of technical support to developing countries. We reiterate our appreciation to the United Nations Development Programme which has enabled us to carry out these technical assistance activities. We are ready to continue this function into the follow-up phase, in co-operation with organizations of the United Nations system, to assist in the evaluation and implementation of the results of the Round.

May I conclude by wishing all negotiators success in their vital enterprise and by thanking the Government of Belgium and the authorities and citizens of Brussels for their hospitality.