

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

MTN.TNC/MIN(90)/ST/20
3 December 1990
Special Distribution

Trade Negotiations Committee

Original: English

Meeting at Ministerial Level
Brussels, December 1990

TURKEY

Statement by H.E. Mr Günes Taner,
Minister of State

We, the ministers and the delegates have assembled for the third time not to review or take stock of a negotiation process but to successfully conclude the final package of results of the Uruguay Round. We are here to inject a new sense of responsibility to meet the prerequisites of the new trading environment; broaden market access; define adequate and equitable disciplines in the new areas; strengthen GATT rules in order to build a more transparent and predictable multilateral trading system; expand trade and foster the economic growth of all nations and the development of developing countries. This can only be achieved through a collective expression of determination. I am confident that our presence here today bears testimony to that fact.

As we enter the last decade of the 20th century, we witness many dramatic political and economic changes, taking place in a number of countries, whether developed or developing. The Gulf crisis on the other hand is an unprecedented torment whose economic and political impact will be felt for a long time. There is a strong move by an increasing number of countries towards integration into the world economy based on the free play of market forces. And, as a way of achieving their goal, these countries are more and more turning to the GATT system. These are major events which will not go down into history unmarked.

Any system is better than none. The GATT system has served the world well and should not need defending, especially when its alternative is: the law of the jungle. Indeed, since its entry into force, GATT's activities have kept pace with major changes in the world economic scene. These have included shifts in the relative economic strengths of important countries or group of countries, the emergence of the developing world as a partner in international affairs, the trend towards regional or preferential economic groups, the worsening problem of debt during the 1980s and the participation of centrally-planned economies in the GATT.

These changes have emphasized GATT's rôle as a forum where such developments can be discussed, where disputes arising from them can be resolved. GATT, served as an instrument to counter their negative effects through efforts towards further liberalization of world trade.

The launching of the Uruguay Round in 1986 constituted another step towards the same end. Indeed, the major objective has been to provide the GATT system with new tools to better adjust and respond to the changing needs of the trading environment. The starting point of the Round has thus been defined as bringing new disciplines to old sectors and old disciplines to new ones.

In that context, the Uruguay Round is not just another negotiating process. It has been the most comprehensive, the most difficult and, in all probability, the most important since the foundation of the GATT. It has become a cause in itself. With the successful conclusion of the Round the GATT will become healthier and more comprehensive. It will achieve the major objective of its founders: bringing together under a one market-based system all trading nations of the world. In other words the very much accepted principles of free trade and market oriented economies are a direct reflection of GATT itself.

It is, therefore, unthinkable that the Round could fail. But it is also almost politically and practically implausible to address any new endeavour if we do not dare make a clean break from the past practices and structures.

Evidently, every major endeavour has its limitations. We must free ourselves from both "no give" and "give all" approaches as is the case in agriculture and substitute instead give and take. Commitment to a substantial and progressive liberalization seems to be, therefore, a more realistic approach. Likewise, in textiles, over discipline should not be replaced by chaos. Liberalization within the framework of the MFA is likely to prove more generally acceptable than any other alternative. The agreement would have to provide enough time to allow industrial adjustment and yet contain, within its rules, measures to ensure the ultimate disappearance of existing restraints.

Progress is both attainable and vital in the new areas, above all in services and intellectual property. Developing countries have legitimate concerns in these areas, but they also have an interest in liberalization and certainly advancement. What is most important, at the initial point, is to include both the right fundamental principles as well as a comprehensive coverage.

A package of liberalizing measures must be reinforced by respect for and effective administration of rules. But first there have to be rules. Therefore, progress must be made in the area of the dispute settlement mechanism of the GATT system. The determining factor in this respect will lie heavily on the willingness of all contracting parties to accept and act upon the panel findings.

In conclusion, if there is to be success, however one may define it, it will clearly require politically risky decisions. Albeit the fact that economic sense at times may be political nonsense. We, in Turkey, throughout the last decades restructuring process, have demonstrated that the bitter pill could be swallowed for the wellbeing of future generations,

and yet reaped the benefits of our bold steps after a surprisingly short period. It is for this reason that we stand ready to participate actively in a process which may herald the wellbeing of all.

It is important to note that the developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, should not be required to assume obligations within the same period as industrial countries. The time-table allowed to them for the implementation of obligations should be commensurate with the process of development itself. But, the principle of universal obligations should be equally accepted if we are aiming at the ideal of a single multilateral trading system.

Time has come for taking hard decisions. For what is at stake is not prosperity alone. It is the framework of international co-operation and security. At a time when conflicts over military security are diminishing those over trade cannot be allowed to increase.