

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Trade Negotiations Committee  
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NIGERIA

Statement by Hon. Mr. Senas J. Ukpanah,  
Minister of Trade and Tourism

I wish to join those who have spoken before me in expressing my sincere appreciation to the Belgian Government, for hosting this meeting and also for the warm hospitality accorded us since our arrival in Brussels. May I also thank the Director-General of GATT and his secretariat staff for the enormous work they have done to support and advance the Uruguay Round negotiations.

It is noteworthy that this Trade Negotiations Committee is taking place at an exceptional period, when the global political and economic walls are being dismantled in favour of market economy and more concerted efforts made towards international economic co-operation. These recent developments in the world geo-political and socio-economic systems are directly relevant and related to the founding objectives of the Uruguay Round.

In the past four years, we have witnessed long and tedious periods of bargaining by negotiators to lay a solid foundation for a durable and efficient multilateral trading system. In this connection, I wish to recall the central element of the Punta del Este mandate, which is the liberalization and expansion of world trade to the benefit of all countries.

Let me refer to the document before us - the draft Final Act. We seriously do not know the extent of the finality of this Final Act. For us, the consideration of a Final Act will come when there is an agreement of the substance. A thorough assessment of the package before us reveals that we are far from the target set by Ministers at Punta del Este. The Brussels Ministerial meeting, therefore, has as its major task to endeavour to meet the expectations of all participants. I believe this is possible through the co-operation of all contracting parties, the willingness to accommodate the concerns of others, the ability to compromise and the political will to take hard decisions. Nigeria is ready and willing to participate actively and contribute to the enhancement of this objective.

However, it is the view of my delegation that the needs and concerns of developing countries must be accommodated in any agreement in the areas of our primary interest. Our priority is in the market access. For a developing country like Nigeria which is undergoing a painful process of structural adjustment and trade liberalization measures, access to markets for its products is desirable for the diversification of its economy and the fulfilment of its development objectives. Some of our industrialized trading partners have refused to lower tariffs on products of interest to us. In the tropical products and natural resource-based groups they have not been forthcoming. Moreover, we are concerned at such developments which require us to make contributions inconsistent with our level of development. Nevertheless, in our desire to contribute positively to and demonstrate our sincere involvement in the negotiations, Nigeria has made offers in all the market access groups.

In non-tariff measures, we have adopted and autonomously implemented measures directed at the deregulation of our economy which have benefited our trading partners since September 1986. I am calling on our trading partners, indeed all participants in the Round to grant appropriate recognition to our contributions and reciprocate them accordingly.

Nigeria, along with many other developing countries, was constrained to negotiate its programme of pre-shipment inspection which is not a non-tariff measure. In spite of our efforts to accept this multilateral framework on it, some of the exporting countries see nothing good in the programme which we have had to implement at a great cost. How else does one explain that the proponents of fair trade are seeking to protect, and legitimize, under the GATT rules, unfair export procedures by refusing to accept a price verification procedure based on a broad spectrum?

On agriculture, Nigeria favours the creation of more effective GATT rules, improved conditions of international competition through better market access and the elimination of the adverse trade effects on sanitary and phytosanitary regulations. However, government measures to encourage development of agriculture through infrastructural provision are considered as integral parts of vital development programmes in developing countries and must be so recognized in any agreement on the issue. Moreover, such agreement must accord us special and more favourable differential treatment that will enable us to develop the agricultural sector. We also urge recognition for, and understanding of, the difficulties of the net-food importing developing countries.

Regarding trade in textiles and clothing, Nigeria supports the removal of all restrictions in terms of access to the markets of the importing countries.

In the institutional and rule making areas, we support the strengthening of the GATT system and an effective dispute settlement mechanism. We will, however, not accept a situation where the rules are made and interpreted to take away the benefits which accrue to contracting parties in the market access areas, or where they constitute obstacles to our development process.

In the new issues, Nigeria would like to counsel against the danger of running too fast in unfamiliar terrain. With particular regard to trade-related investment measures, our position is unequivocal in the rejection of the prohibition approach under the presumption that investment measures restrict trade. In our view, it is not the function of the international community to formulate the investment régimes of individual contracting parties. Any framework agreement on TRIMs should focus on the effect of those measures on international trade.

On trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights, GATT should confine itself to only trade-related issues. No régime of protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights should impose an unbearable burden on us and stifle our aspirations towards access to technology.

The services sector still remains the most uncharted terrain in the negotiations. In developing countries, this sector remains weak, underdeveloped and therefore, uncompetitive. For effective participation in trade in services, our capacity to develop the sectors and attain export potential must be developed. It is of much concern that the provisions of increasing participation of developing countries fall far short of expectations. Regrettably, there are no firm obligations by the industrialized countries for evolving and strengthening the services sectors of developing countries. We also view with concern the discriminatory treatment accorded labour either as a factor of production or a mode of delivery. However, we advocate a universal coverage and unconditional most-favoured-nation provision in any framework agreement on trade in services.

Before I conclude my statement, I wish to emphasize that Africa, as the poorest region and the home of most of the least-developed countries of the world, needs to be accorded special dispensation in this Round in order to accelerate the economic development of our countries.

After four years of intensive negotiations, the time has come to make decisions. Ministers will thereafter be in a position to consider the implementation of these decisions. According to the Ministerial mandate, the results of the MTN must be established before deciding on the implementation. A single undertaking that will marginalize the rights of some of the contracting parties does not seem to us an acceptable answer in the on-going discussions.

In conclusion, Nigeria believes in the balance of rights and obligations. We are prepared to discuss means that will lead to the achievement of this objective without sacrificing our development policy objectives.