

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Trade Negotiations Committee
Meeting at Ministerial Level
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ZIMBABWE

Statement by The Honourable K.M. Kangai,
Minister of Industry and Commerce

At the outset allow me to express my delegation's total confidence in your distinguished qualities, which I hope will contribute significantly to our deliberations. I would also like to convey our sincere thanks to the people and Government of the Kingdom of Belgium for the warm welcome and hospitality that has embraced us since our arrival here in Brussels.

The tremendous political effort that has gone into the Multilateral Trade Negotiations of the Uruguay Round so far is self-evident. Since the Uruguay Round was launched in Punta del Este four years ago, progress has been marked by the crystalization of divergent and near-convergent positions on various areas under discussion. In spite of the numerous contentious issues, the negotiations, nevertheless, have succeeded in putting the problems and issues of the international trading system in their proper perspective.

It is the wish of my delegation to see these areas of differences narrowed until we reach substantive agreements. It is also my wish to focus on a few areas that are of crucial importance to my country.

The Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations are going on at a time when my country is in the process of opening up the economy by introducing measures designed to liberalize the economy. We have committed ourselves to open the Zimbabwean economy over the next five years wherever possible. To us this means that even after the Uruguay Round has been concluded we will still be making voluntary concessions on market access.

Further to the ongoing trade liberalization process Zimbabwe has tabled concrete offers in three market access areas namely tariffs, tropical products and natural resource-based products. In line with the agreed procedures we have also made requests to a number of participants. It is our fervent hope that our partners will be more forthcoming in their responses.

Our expectations are that granted meaningful concessions we would gain increased access to markets with a consequent expansion of trade and foreign exchange earnings which are essential for the financing of the

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current trade liberalization programme. Still on the market access areas, the sector of agriculture is particularly important to my country as well as many other developing countries. Participants have already acknowledged that excessive support to agriculture has a distortive trade effect. In that regard, this Ministerial meeting should come up with a solution that addresses this problem adequately. However, it is our desire as developing countries that the results of agricultural negotiations should provide differential and more favourable treatment. This would enable them to continue to protect and complement programmes that encourage agricultural and rural development while obtaining preferential access to world markets.

The other subjects of interest to my delegation are TRIMs, subsidies and countervailing duties. Because of the special problems that accompany the economic restructuring programme which we are undertaking, we find ourselves in difficulties with certain proposals seeking prohibition on some of the measures under the subjects I have mentioned above which we consider necessary for the success of these programmes. I therefore suggest that once a basis for negotiations has been found, Ministers should proceed to accept those provisions which enable developing countries to use some of these measures to support their national development policies and also to accept that they are necessary for their various restructuring programmes.

As regards Trade in Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) there is no doubt of the need to protect intellectual property rights. This we would like to believe that it encourages creativity and innovativeness with a consequent transfer of technology to developing countries. Be that as it may, the negative effects of this protection on development should not be underplayed in any agreement that we may come up with. We are aware of how protection can bring about monopolies, restrictions in trade and possible suppression of innovativeness in the small-scale sector.

It is pleasing to note that participants accept that in many areas there are imbalances in trade and also constraints for developing countries to substantially increase their level of performance.

While my delegation accepts the concept of liberalization in the area of services we have to acknowledge that we face major difficulties in competing in developed markets. It is our view that at this Ministerial meeting urgent action should be taken to endorse those provisions which capture the interests of developing countries.

The results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations should be balanced and should also be reflective of the problems of developing countries in the international trading system. It is my sincere belief that with sufficient goodwill and a sense of responsibility among us, we should be able to reach a successful conclusion of our deliberations.