

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

MTN.TNC/MIN(90)/ST/63  
5 December 1990  
Special Distribution

Original: Spanish

Trade Negotiations Committee

Meeting at Ministerial Level  
Brussels, December 1990

VENEZUELA

Statement by H.E. Mr. Reinaldo Figueredo Planchart,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Even though we are nearing the end of these negotiations we are still encountering major difficulties in attaining key agricultural objectives that would integrate this sector fully into GATT.

In the course of its arduous structural adjustment process, Venezuela spared no effort even in this sector, whose contribution to the development of the country's economy is relatively limited, to do away with protectionist measures that affect its efficiency at the international level. Yet if distortions are maintained in integrated economic units or areas of major importance to the world economy, our efforts have no meaning unless all countries in the world make similar efforts to attain the same objective.

Interest in this process does not, however, detract from our fundamental interest in the framework of this General Agreement, which is based on improved access to markets and the strengthening of GATT rules.

Like many other developing countries, the economic reform programme that is being carried out by President Pérez's administration is intended to bring about the integration of our economy into the world economy through efforts to achieve greater efficiency. This explains the dismantling of a large number of import restrictions in Venezuela.

Yet if the trickle-down process is to bring about the positive action that is sought by the reforms being carried out and thus has the effect of opening up our economy, it is vital not only to dismantle barriers, but also to eliminate the discriminatory measures that in many cases are applied to products which are of special interest to us.

What, in global terms, has been Venezuela's modest contribution to these negotiations? It consists essentially in the voluntary application of measures to liberalize our trade as well as our tariff binding. That contribution should be recognized as such and due credit paid. This is the considered belief of developing countries in a situation similar to ours.

Venezuela's objective - today in GATT just as yesterday in its multilateral activities - has always been world trade on a stable, transparent and predictable basis. The best illustration of this is

offered by our reaction to the Persian Gulf crisis. From the very beginning we sought the restoration of an energy market free from the price speculation that causes serious distortions in the world economy. Yet in that respect, as in all others, it was not enough that certain members of OPEC in a position to do so should agree - as indeed they did - to increase the production of hydrocarbons to offset what happened in OPEC before the crisis. A convergence of views between producers and consumers was necessary. That convergence was not achieved despite our appeals, and we regret it sincerely.

We will not deny that bilateralism plays an important rôle in the concertation and adaptation of agreements to international rules and agreements. Providing that the rules agreed upon in contexts such as the one that brings us together here in Brussels are respected, there is no reason why we should fear the application of greater weight in negotiations in this or that area.

Our determination to stand by this Agreement at a time when steps are being taken to shape the trade system of the future reflects a desire to participate and to contribute to the best of our ability to whatever is done to improve the rules governing trade in goods and services, including those relating to policies or legislation affecting intellectual property. This sector is of concern to us and calls for special attention as far as the developing countries are concerned. We are also concerned by the fact that an attempt is being made to treat as subsidies the price differential that may exist at the national level as a result of our own comparative advantages.

Venezuela will contribute in a constructive manner to any agreements that are likely to bring about the success of these negotiations. Owing to its status as a developing country, it must take particular care to ensure that the achievement of its own objectives is not frustrated. What is required is a concerted effort that is in the interest of all participants but that does not overlook the special treatment to which we are entitled as a developing country.