

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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MALAWI

Statement by Hon. R.W. Chirwa,  
Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism

Allow me first of all to thank His Majesty the King, the Government and people of Belgium for the warm hospitality accorded to all of us gathered here. The arrangements and facilities for this conference are very conducive to a successful conclusion of the meeting. Let me also share the benefit of this occasion to appreciate the hard work put in by the GATT secretariat in making the adequate arrangements for this meeting. I am very hopeful that all the players in the negotiations will take advantage of the environment.

Malawi is a country which is classified by the United Nations as least developed. The country is, above anything else, a contracting party to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. We became a contracting party to the General Agreement in the year we attained our independent nationhood. That is 1964. It is a reflection that the Malawi Government is firmly committed to international co-operation in trade and economic arrangements. We attach great importance to multilateral trade negotiations and to the Uruguay Round and this is portrayed by our being here this week.

While there is a firm commitment, on our part, to the attainment of the virtues of the multilateral trading system, we would like to remind the trading community about the special problems of the least-developed countries. Our problems mostly relate to short-comings in production and in marketing. Despite our smallness, in terms of size and economic activities, we would be pleased if our voice could be heard and taken into account in the conclusion of the Round. We are acutely aware of the phenomenon that when elephants fight, grass gets trampled on. So do not forget us.

Our major interests are in the areas of market access. We would like to see that the spirit of Punta del Este is upheld in the Final Act. The developing countries in general and the least-developed countries in particular should have differential and more favourable treatment by way of preserving, safeguarding and, in certain areas, improving the preferential trade arrangements.

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On market access Malawi has, in the past few years, been contributing to the multilateral trading spirit by implementing, though unilaterally, market opening measures under structural adjustment programmes. We believe these should be given due credit as a contribution to the liberalization of the multilateral trading system.

The Malawi economy is predominantly based on agriculture and tropical products. The textiles and clothing sector is also growing and becoming important. The country is therefore greatly interested in developments pertaining to trade in agricultural and tropical products, as well as textiles. We would like to support calls that specifically urge the adoption of provisions which would ease for us the access to markets of these exports. The issue of tariff escalation and the problems of standards and other regulations should be given careful thought. An accommodation must be provided for the poorer contracting parties so that the benefits from the multilateral trading system are equitable to all Members of the GATT.

In the areas of new issues, specifically trade in services, TRIMs and TRIPs, we are only hopeful that our concerns and those of the least-developed countries in general will be taken into consideration. Whatever finally emerges from these negotiations we are interested in having a situation whereby foreign direct investment is easily available to us and that the investment environment and the operations of the foreign investors are beneficial to the development of the host countries as well as the investors. Similarly, on intellectual property rights, we would like that new and old ideas are easily accessible to us. That is, transfer of technology should be aided rather than hampered by legalistic arrangements.

Let me once more say that we look forward to a balanced outcome to the negotiations. To us a balanced outcome is the one in which the poorest members of the trading community are not left out.