

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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ZAIRE

Statement by Mr. Buketi Bukayi,
Minister for International Co-operation

I should like first of all to express my delegation's gratitude to the Government and people of Belgium for their warm welcome and for the facilities made available to all delegations to ensure the success of this Ministerial meeting of the Uruguay Round.

It was four years ago that the contracting parties launched the Uruguay Round at Punta del Este. Its objective was to liberalize international trade so that it would contribute to economic growth, development and the well-being of all peoples without distinction.

And yet, after four years of long and difficult negotiations, scepticism and disquiet are haunting the final phase of the Uruguay Round.

It is one of GATT's characteristic features that agreements are always negotiated on a give-and-take basis. This in a nutshell explains why countries which carry very little weight in world trade find this exercise so difficult. Indeed, in taking stock of these four years of difficult negotiations it is clear that the developing countries could - because there is no point in hiding the truth - find themselves on the fringes of international trade burdened with their share of problems, namely, indebtedness, deterioration in their terms of trade, reduction of financial flows and a host of others.

Could it be that the Uruguay Round is intended only to settle the disputes of the well-off countries?

I do not think so. The final round of these negotiations should on the contrary result in a better regulation of international trade in the reasoned interest of one and all.

My delegation dares to hope that, in this crucial phase, the well-off contracting parties will remember the commitments they assumed in Punta del Este in 1986 concerning the developing countries, namely, the effective application of special and differentiated treatment for developing contracting parties.

We regret that the future of these negotiations is compromised because of differences on the agricultural question which has today become the Gordian knot of the Uruguay Round negotiations. We are aware that the future of free trade now depends on an acceptable solution or compromise in respect of trade in agricultural products.

After having demanded the launching of a new cycle of trade negotiations on new subjects such as services, intellectual property and trade-related investment measures, our partners from the industrialized countries are trying to promote the idea of waivers and a return to bilateralism. But this approach creates blockages and leads to deadlocks in various negotiating groups.

Free trade and market opening to ensure the growth of world trade cannot be achieved and guaranteed without real political will and a spirit of universal solidarity. The idea underlying the creation of a new GATT would be rendered meaningless so long as certain developed contracting parties, for reasons of their own, oppose the application of the most-favoured-nation clause.

The Republic of Zaire firmly believes in the virtues of liberalism. Despite its economic difficulties, since 1986 Zaire has been implementing a programme of structural adjustment in the course of which it has restructured its customs tariffs, by adapting them to the requirements of the Harmonized System, it has eliminated peak tariffs and has stabilized import duties around an average rate of 30 per cent. We have eliminated quantitative import restrictions. Since 1983, the customs duty, revenue duty, temporary charge and statistical charge have been merged, in the interests of simplification, into a single charge termed the "import duty".

Import duties are established in a rational manner:

- 5 per cent on heavy equipment goods;
- 15 per cent on all goods intended for agriculture, animal husbandry or fishery;
- 20 per cent to 50 per cent on other goods.

My country hopes that, in this final phase of the Uruguay Round, our developed trade partners will recognize the need and the urgency of finding real solutions to matters that bear on our vital interests, such as access to markets, and observance of preferential treatment.

Zaire also hopes that a positive outcome can be found to the question of pre-shipment inspection. This would contribute substantially to improving the world trade environment.

Furthermore, my delegation remains alert to certain ideas that are going around, in the sense of accepting certain concepts such as "the principle of forced globality, the link between results on agriculture and trade in tropical products".

We all want this meeting to have a positive outcome. We want to prevent any return to waivers, unilateralism, bilateralism and protectionism. This will require true political will on the part of our governments, a spirit of universal solidarity, a reliable mechanism for dispute settlement, and a strong multilateral trade organization.

Our greatest hope is to see the GATT embark on a new era that holds the promise of true democratization of international relations through trade for development, as the prelude to a more equitable and more human new world order.