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SENEGAL

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This phase of the Uruguay Round in Brussels, situated in the heart of the EEC, is a sign of the times and constitutes a unique event full of promise and fraught with uncertainty about the round of multilateral trade negotiations which was launched in Punta del Este four years ago.

Indeed, the Community of the 12 is in itself an impressive model and a meaningful example of economic integration with which countries of the South, including the ACP countries are associated and which should provide us with food for thought about this vast enterprise called the Uruguay Round - that is more ambitious than any of those preceding it.

The specific task at hand is to establish a multilateral system to ensure the greater liberalization and expansion of world trade for the benefit of all countries, and particularly the developing countries which have played an active part in it.

Since Punta del Este and the Mid-Term Review at Montreal, the course of events has been speeding up and the transformations and changes in the world order that have been brought about are characterized by irresistible progress towards the principles and ideals adopted more than 40 years ago by the contracting parties in establishing the General Agreement.

The structural transformation of the world economy has also been accompanied by the end of the cold war and ideological upheavals in Europe.

The trend towards a market economy promoted by the adjustments and reforms being carried out in the developing countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia, as well as in those with a transition economy in Central and Eastern Europe, reveals the interest displayed in the principles that inspired the GATT agreements, namely, trade on a multilateral, balanced and non-discriminatory basis as well as determination to prepare the ground for co-operation, mutual comprehension and the establishment of peaceful links between all countries of the world.

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In any event, it is in this context that in Geneva the developing countries, including Senegal, embarked upon technical discussions in fifteen negotiating groups, the draft final act of which is before us and summarizes the various draft agreements which it was possible to up, in some cases containing brackets, alternative solutions or indications of deadlocks that must now be resolved at the political level.

The results set out in this document in respect of market access, institutional questions, tariffs, non-tariff measures, tropical products, natural resource-based products, agriculture, textiles and clothing, safeguards and many others are far from meeting the expectations and hopes raised at Punta del Este.

At the very least, the situation of the African countries which are racked by the economic crisis and which include most of the LDCs and low-income countries, requires that measures should be taken to guarantee them a balanced position.

In other words, the obligations assumed by the African countries in respect of the concessions or contributions demanded of them should be compatible with their conditions of development.

As regards the new subjects, such as trade-related investment measures (TRIMs) or intellectual property rights (TRIPs) as well as services, it is vital that any agreement in these sectors should correspond to the objectives and dimension of development in accordance with the spirit of the Punta del Este Declaration.

Several speakers from the developed countries have of course referred to and indeed emphasized this basic assumption. They include President Jacques Delors, Prime Minister Wilfried Martens, Minister Robert Urbain, Minister Renato Ruggiero, Minister Jean-Marie Rausch and many others, among whom was Mr. Jean Pascal Delamuraz, Swiss Federal Counsellor, who stated "the most important challenge [is] that of the full and complete attachment of the developing world to the formidable engine of growth and development represented by world trade based on a system of multilateral rules".

The African countries for their part consider that if they are to expand their trade by relying on competitive export sectors they must be supported in their national development efforts by being allowed access not only to markets but also to financial resources and technology so as to strengthen their infrastructure and technological capacity, which are essential factors in the modernization and industrialization process.

In any event, the interdependence of these trade, monetary financial questions and development is at present indisputable if stability is to be restored in international economic relations.

In this respect, the indebtedness crisis, the deterioration of terms of trade, monetary instability and macro-economic imbalances all hamper the development and expansion of trade.

For this reason, GATT should be able, in co-operation with the competent international institutions in the monetary, financial and development spheres, to promote better harmonization of economic policies at the international level.

Moreover, it is increasingly recognized that the sound management of the world's resources entails constraints, and that the idea of stable development that generates the benefits of trade also implies protection of the natural environment.

In other words, international trade is not only a factor of economic growth but should also be an instrument of development, bringing about social progress in order to meet the challenges of structural inequality and poverty in all regions of the world.

If this is to be so, the contracting parties should have confidence that GATT can bring about a liberalization of world trade based on equitable and genuinely multilateral rules and disciplines.

These rules, applied to an open system of benefit to all parties and of a universal nature, would help to provide a sound basis for the expansion and development not only of their economies but also the world economy.

Without going too deeply into the question of dispute settlement, I would say that the developing countries should be associated with settlement procedures and that care should be taken to avoid the dispersion and proliferation of settlement procedures or retaliation measures.

Generally speaking and without losing sight of the political realities of our respective societies, steps must be taken to satisfy the desire for an expansion of trade and an improvement in well-being in order to establish a stable and predictable multilateral framework conducive to the developments of various production factors by providing them with a favourable climate.

The Uruguay Round is clearly intended to prepare the multilateral trade system of the year 2000 by opening up world markets over a vast economic area adapted to modern technological and development requirements.

A new page must be turned in the history of trade between developed and developing countries and between developing countries themselves.

Lastly, the time has come to find, through consensus, the solutions to problems likely to create an environment that will ensure respect for the mutually advantageous interests of parties, world peace and stability.

At this point, it would be well to recall the recent decisions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its eighteenth special session devoted to international economic co-operation and the revitalization of economic growth which reflected a global consensus between the partners of the North and South concerning the search for solutions to the major economic, scientific, social, ecological and humanitarian questions of our time.

Realism, pragmatism and responsibility are therefore required so that this GATT Ministerial Meeting can become a decisive and constructive phase of the Uruguay Round.

For in the final analysis what we are trying to do is to improve world trade by tackling the political, economic and trade aspects that may hamper it, on the understanding that each party is entitled to advantages to offset the concessions it makes.

It goes without saying that developing countries that are the most disadvantaged are the most open to the liberalization of world trade, even though they have not always benefited from it.

In short, what we must establish is a "legal order" in trade, in the words of President Jacques Delors.

I should like to transmit to you, Mr. Chairman, the warmest wishes for your success from President Abdou Diouf and his Minister of the Economy and Finance who was unable to come. They have also requested me to thank Mr. Dunkel and the entire GATT secretariat for their devotion and efficiency during the long technical discussions. Lastly, it is an honour for me to express on their behalf our deep gratitude to the Belgian authorities who were kind enough to act as hosts in Brussels to this memorable Ministerial Meeting of the Uruguay Round which has no equal in GATT history.