

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

MTN.TNC/MIN(94)/ST/19
12 April 1994
General Distribution
(UR-94-0115)

Trade Negotiations Committee
Meeting at Ministerial Level
Marrakesh (Morocco), 12-15 April 1994

Original: English

KOREA

Statement by Mr. Kim Chulsu
Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy

We are approaching the end of the long journey we set out on more than seven years ago in Punta del Este. On behalf of the Korean Government, I am pleased to join with my fellow Ministers today in celebrating the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, the most comprehensive and far-reaching trade negotiation in history.

All parties have shown the needed political will to make the Round a considerable achievement. Some may have gained more than others, and some might be affected more than others. We know, however, that all parties are winners in both the economic and the political sense. In the long-run, all will enormously benefit from the new agreement.

Korea has actively participated in the Round from the beginning. I would like to emphasize that my Government has made extremely difficult decisions, particularly with respect to agricultural liberalization, in an effort to contribute to the timely and successful completion of the Round. Korea is now undergoing wide-ranging structural adjustment in the agricultural sector, which, you can well imagine, is far from being a simple and easy undertaking.

The Uruguay Round Agreement has substantially strengthened the principle of multilateralism. It has, *inter alia*, reduced trade barriers in various sectors, made the rules more transparent, and introduced a stronger dispute settlement system. I am confident that this agreement will go a long way toward helping maintain Korea's development momentum. Free trade will continue to provide an engine of growth for the Korean economy as it has done for the past 30 years. The Korean Government is, therefore, committed to rendering its best efforts for the full implementation of the agreement.

Our imminent task should, in fact, be to implement the Agreement in accordance with the spirit and the letter of genuine multilateralism. I understand that all parties will now begin to review their domestic trade rules with a view to modifying them so that they can be brought into conformity with the new Agreement. I strongly urge that we complete all necessary domestic procedures at the earliest possible date.

We must continue to combine our efforts to help the WTO develop into an organization working effectively for the betterment and well-being of all countries. In this respect, the Korean delegation suggests that we expedite the screening process for pending membership applications insofar as all the requirements are met. By so doing, we can help make sure that the WTO lives up to its name as a true world organization.

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I would like to take this opportunity to register concern over the non-multilateral approaches taken by some of our members that could undermine our recent multilateral achievements. Such approaches will undoubtedly jeopardize the very viability of the new world organization. All the parties should now abide by the new rules, and bring any trade cases to a multilateral forum instead of managing them bilaterally or resorting to unilateral actions.

I am also greatly concerned about the trend toward exclusive trading blocs. It may well be that the existing GATT Articles are not sufficiently specific and transparent to provide criteria for acceptable forms of regional integration. Let me suggest that we discuss this issue in the WTO in greater detail with the aim of further specifying the rules for free trade agreements and customs union that would serve to supplement and strengthen the multilateral regime.

We know that this is the end of one journey, but the beginning of another. Already, some entirely new issues are being discussed either officially or unofficially in the context of the future work of the WTO. The first agenda item for the WTO is to identify the relationship between trade measures and environmental measures. Free trade and environmental protection are the two issues of pivotal importance in promoting sustainable development of all nations. Furthermore, ecological problems tend to transcend national borders, and therefore require cross-border prescriptions and actions. Nevertheless, the developing world is concerned that environmental protection could become a new pretext for protectionism. Now that all contracting parties recognize the significance of this issue, it would seem timely to establish a mechanism in the WTO to discuss it. I suggest that we should approach the issue with a balanced view considering the need to both promote economic development and protect the environment.

A few other topics are also being explored by some of the member countries as likely agenda items for the WTO. On many of these topics, we must anticipate that the interests of developed and developing countries will be in sharp contradiction to each other. In helping resolve the potential conflicts that may result, Korea can, I believe, offer a valuable perspective. Our interests as a newly industrializing country overlap those of both developed and developing nations, yet do not coincide with those of either camp. Thus, we may be in a good position to objectively take into account both sets of interests. On this basis, I would hope that Korea could play a facilitating role in addressing the content of the agenda and the parameters for discussion under the new WTO regime.

What we are witnessing here at Marrakesh, as we are about to set the seal on the agreement, represents a triumph of the art of the possible. I would like to commend all who have participated in the long, painstaking process and finally produced the positive sum accord for each and every member. My appreciation in this regard should go, above all, to the Director-General Mr. Peter Sutherland, his predecessor Mr. Arthur Dunkel, and the entire GATT Secretariat. Lastly, let me join with my colleagues in thanking the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for inviting us to Marrakesh and offering us the gracious hospitality for which this country is so well known.