

**MULTILATERAL TRADE  
NEGOTIATIONS  
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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**BAHRAIN**

Statement by H.E. Ahbib A. Kassim  
Minister of Commerce and Agriculture

I would first like to extend the thanks of my Government to the Government of Morocco for being such gracious hosts for this important event.

I have the honour to represent the Government of Bahrain, and to convey a message of hope that the ratification of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round here in Marrakesh, together with Ministerial Resolutions, and the establishment of the World Trade Organization, will be the engine of expansion in global trade, that will lead to the prosperity of all Nations.

The prosperity of least-developed countries must be a primary goal, we cannot call ourselves a community of nations whilst such disparities in basic human conditions exist as we see in the world today. An increase in total trade can help to redress this balance, but only if we enter into this Agreement in accordance with its true spirit, not simply the form of the text.

Reaching this Agreement has been a significant achievement for all those involved, it is not only a milestone in world trade, but also a major impetus to global unity, and hopefully an indication that we have reached an era where other burgeoning world problems can be tackled in the same spirit of international understanding and cooperation. The decisions to be taken here linking trade and environmental issues, is an example of our common desire to see international cooperation take on a new meaning.

Bahrain is a small island State, small in size, but large in its aspirations to play a full role in the international community.

Unlike many signatories, Bahrain did not have to make any major changes either to its import regime or to market access rules; our economy was already open by all international standards. We have low import tariffs applied on a non-discriminatory basis, and in other aspects we already satisfied membership criteria.

We do not discriminate, and have gone to great lengths over the past years to create the right sort of investment climate to encourage foreign investment into our country in all areas compatible with our development, industrial diversification and environmental parameters. Being a part of these negotiations and a signatory to the Final Act is proof of this fact, and of our commitment to sharing in the responsibility of fostering a growth in world trade.

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It goes without saying that we all expect to gain from our respective membership of the WTO. Bahrain will benefit mostly from having a more stable platform of international rules by which trading partners must comply, causing less disruption to our trade through unilateral actions. We also expect that membership will provide a fillip to inward investment, as would-be investors see this as a further signal that we play by international rules.

From the richest-developed country to the poorest least-developed country, there is an all pervading commonality of basic human needs, which must be addressed in the very fabric of international cooperation. The establishment of the WTO is an outstanding example of international cooperation, and provides us with our best shot at killing the beast of poverty.

We all have the right to expect a great deal from this Agreement, we need to succeed in building a more stable world economy where hunger, poverty, disease and social unrest can be relegated to history, we have a way forward, let us take these steps together for the future in the hope that we will be opening a new chapter in human history.

Finally, let me congratulate all those who have participated in the negotiations which have finalized in this Act. For some, I know that the burden of reaching an agreement has been a heavy one, to those we must offer our special thanks. Let us also not forget the Director-General and staff of the GATT Secretariat, who have laboured so diligently over the past years.