

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Trade Negotiations Committee
Meeting at Ministerial Level
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SLOVENIA

Statement by Dr. Davori Kračun
Minister for Economic Relations and Development
(Speaking as an Observer)

The Republic of Slovenia, as a country still in the process of accession to the GATT, takes a serious view at becoming a responsible and active member of the WTO and adapting to the obligations which the multilateral framework of trade implies. This Ministerial meeting and finalization of the Uruguay Round trade negotiations, with the establishment of the universal World Trade Organization, is indeed a historic occasion even for us as observers, which gives us an opportunity to become a part of the process and a view of the future. It is a triumph, that after some generations, the Bretton Woods structure will finally be complete.

Though a smaller sized economy, Slovenia nevertheless ranks 45th in the world in export trade and 49th in the import trade. In the structure of our GDP, the share of foreign trade is roughly 65 per cent. This fact alone underlines the importance of trade to our country. It is a country in transition, making big strides in the area of economic and social restructuring, which in the past three years has given results in which we take pride. These are evident in the stability of the country, in moderate economic growth, in real growth of exports and imports in spite of world economic recession, in a dropping rate of inflation, which currently is below 20 per cent per annum and we believe it will go down to 13 per cent within this year. Privatization of the economy is proceeding as planned. With this in view, I cannot but sufficiently stress the expectations which come from the anticipated spread and sharing of the results of the negotiations which took so many years to conclude, mainly in the area of security and predictability of conditions of trade. What is most important for us and other smaller-sized economies is lessened discrimination and pressure from the bigger and stronger economies and trading countries. If these hopes will indeed be matched by concrete results, once the establishment of the WTO will be well under way, then indeed we can look forward to a new generation of growth in practically all the sectors of the economy.

A trade environment, under more equitable rules, is of universal interest.

I would like to underscore here the importance of integration for our economy, under economic reform, into the multilateral trade framework. Several trade agreements have been signed by my Government, recently, with a view of significant relaxation of trade barriers and stepped-up development of economic cooperation with individual countries. Other agreements are being negotiated. I have mentioned this in order to underline the fact that a successful conclusion of the process of accession to the GATT, for my country, is of a most crucial importance. For us it is an unsettled issue and we feel that there should be no relaxation of efforts to enable us to proceed towards World Trade Organization membership, and acceptance of the obligations which the implementation of the results of the Uruguay Round of negotiations. An open and constructive approach to this question should

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make it easier for us to accept these obligations and contribute, for our part to the desired fulfilment of commitments. On the other hand, we expect to be given fair treatment within a multilateral trade framework.

My Government is in favour of and will strongly support, as well as rely upon the mechanism of the multilateral trade system with an orientation to an open and competitive domestic economy. Because of its geographic position and for other important reasons, my country will continuously pursue ways of economic integration as a means of gaining new economic impetus and to help deal with the issues of economic reform.

Through the process of accession, to date, my Government has already expressed its commitment to GATT rules, and here I wish to reiterate this same commitment to these rules and to the implementation of the rules embodied in the Final Act, which we will begin to translate into our legal system, as soon as we have completed our first stage of the accession process.

The promise of an effective World Trade Organization, should it transpose into a broad range of functions, into a new quality of economic relations in the world, into a truly effective decision-making body and a forum which would reflect the diversity of its members, then small and medium economies such as my country have a great deal to gain. Most of all, equal opportunity, equitable treatment, fair competition, is of the greatest importance to small and medium-sized economies. The stability in the world trade system may be enough for some to gain a better foothold in the world economy. The small and mid-sized economies are particularly vulnerable to trade instruments, though legal, that impede export growth, divert trade, and blame imports for mostly domestically generated problems.

We look forward to our contribution to the future World Trade Organization and to the resolution of world economic issues that have not yet been fully addressed.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to the Director-General, Mr. Sutherland, for his support in the process of accession, to members of the GATT Secretariat, who helped us along the road of accession with advice, and particular appreciation goes to ambassador Julio Lacarte, for his excellent leadership in the Working Party and generous assistance.

At the end, my thanks go to the host country and the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for the excellent organization of this meeting.