

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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JAMAICA

Statement by the Hon. Paul Robertson
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

We are gathered in Marrakesh for the purpose of signing historic agreements that will have an impact on the trade and economic relations between our countries, well into the 21st century.

Many distinguished personalities have outlined their views and positions on the advantages and disadvantages of the Uruguay Round agreement and their vision of a new world trading order arising out of our commitments here.

I share the view that the conclusion of the Uruguay Round after seven years of difficult negotiations is an achievement in itself. The fact that 123 nations have come to an agreement which should create conditions for a new era of economic growth and prosperity is a worthy accomplishment.

The Ministerial Declaration which we will adopt commits us to do a number of things. We must continue to liberalize our trade. The discipline of multilateral trade rules must be respected. Special measures must be devised to protect the interests of developing countries. Some of these commitments will require the setting up of new bodies and new mechanisms if they are to be implemented effectively.

With respect to my own country, new legislation may be necessary to implement the agreements contained in the Final Act. We dedicate ourselves to that task ahead, to do what is required to bring about the new world order in multilateral trade, an order where peace, prosperity and equity, are our main objectives.

Our presence, today, bears testimony to our faith in the potential which a liberalized and disciplined international trading system offers by way of the restoration of growth and dynamism to the world economy.

In Jamaica's view, the conclusion of the Uruguay Round is truly a significant step taking us closer to that goal.

During this period when the international community is experiencing profound political, economic and technological changes, Jamaica like other small developing countries has no choice but to do what is necessary to meet the difficult challenges facing us. We, therefore, join with other countries through the process of integration and cooperation in seizing new opportunities for international cooperation. In the pursuit of our external trade policies, we have undertaken fundamental domestic reforms that take into account the changing international environment, particularly the fast growing competition in the multilateral trading system which has developed and with which we have to deal.

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Jamaica is, therefore, committed to play its part in ensuring that the results of the Uruguay Round will bring about a stronger and fairer multilateral trading system. Over the last two decades, global trade liberalization has become the single greatest principle, guiding the international trading system. Experience has shown that economic growth and development are enhanced by trade liberalization and more predictable international trade rules. We are optimistic that the outcome of the Uruguay Round, with improved institutional arrangements under the world trade organisation will provide the means to assist in attaining the objective of economic growth and development.

If the agreements we intend to sign at this meeting result in genuine expansion of trade and the consequential creation of employment and income generation, then these agreements should bring about an improvement in the real standard of living of our peoples.

However, if our presence here is not followed up with a firm commitment to allow the trade liberalization process to work equitably, benefitting all the participating countries, then the hopes of many countries for growth and development will not be realized. The recession which we have been experiencing over the last four or five years will only get worse with the result that unemployment will increase, real output will decrease, and we will all sink deeper into greater economic imbalances and dislocation.

The proposal to include in the work of the World Trade Organization the question of labour standards as they relate to international trade, has generated much controversy. This is not the appropriate occasion to enter into a detailed discussion on the merits of the issue. We would wish to say, however, that Jamaica, given its history and political development, cannot be silent when issues of unfair and questionable labour practises are raised.

My Government has always supported efforts designed to enhance workers' rights and to ensure that fair wages are paid. However, we are strongly of the view that the issue of workers' rights should not be used as a pretext to raise barriers to the flow of international trade, and to reduce the comparative advantage which developing countries presently enjoy in certain sectors. We will, however, elaborate on our view at the appropriate time.

As you are aware, on the basis of preliminary analysis, there is a difference of opinion as to the benefits to be derived from the Uruguay Round for each and every participant, particularly those developing countries like our own which currently enjoy trade preferences and are "net food-importing countries". In launching the Uruguay Round at Punta del Este in 1986, ministers anticipated these problems and declared that participants in the Round should not find themselves in a worse position at the end of it, than they were prior to the negotiations.

I, therefore, strongly support the view that a monitoring mechanism should be established within the World Trade Organization (WTO) to consider any negative effects consequent on the results of the Uruguay Round, and to find ways of redressing the problem including compensation for the losses sustained.

I cannot end this statement without acknowledging the generous hospitality of the Government and people of Morocco since our arrival in Marrakesh and let me express to you my appreciation for the efficient and productive manner in which the meeting has been conducted.

I would also like to place on record Jamaica's profound appreciation to the Director-General of GATT Mr. Peter Sutherland for his dynamic role in steering the negotiations to a successful conclusion as well as to pay tribute to the invaluable leadership given by his predecessor Mr. Arthur Dunkel during his term of office.