

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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FINLAND

Statement by Mr. Pertti Salolainen
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The conclusion of the seven year long negotiations has brought us to Marrakesh to finalize the results of the Uruguay Round. The Round has often been described as the most comprehensive and ambitious of all trade negotiations ever embarked upon. Seldom, if ever, a general characterization has been more in point. We have not only been giving a new strength to the backbone of the traditional GATT, but have brought a spectrum of new items under multilaterally agreed rules and disciplines. When this has taken place at the same time as new participants have entered into the international trading community and a new World Trade Organization is created, we can sincerely today pay a tribute to the achievement of the first genuinely global trading system.

A well functioning multilateral trading system based on clear and unambiguous rules creates a stable and predictable trading environment for all, but it is of utmost importance to small and outward orientated countries like Finland. This is why Finland has attached such a great importance to the rules area in the negotiations. Mutually agreed common rules and greater transparency alongside improved dispute settlement procedures creates a fair playground to compete for all participants alike.

The successful conclusion of the Round will diminish protectionistic pressures and give a remarkable push to global economic growth due to the enhanced business confidence and increased market access opportunities. The major challenge facing the industrialized world, namely the contribution to the reconstruction of the formerly socialist economies, will be facilitated at the same time as developing countries, particularly those pursuing export-oriented economic strategies, will get new impulses for their growth. The conclusion enables us as well to come to grips with the trade issues of the 1990s, such as the environment and competition.

In front of the new challenges we should be positive and forward-looking. Items like trade and environment as well as trade and social issues and standards have been in the forefront of international trade policy discussions and in the media recently.

Let me briefly explain our principal position on these matters:

- It has to be perfectly clear that environmental or social arguments must not be used artificially for protectionist purposes. At the same time we should be prepared to discuss these matters together in a sincere and detailed manner;
- Social standards, at least indirectly are a part of a wider trade policy issue, one dealing with trade and competition.

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The ground for further work on social standards should be carefully prepared. Concepts should be clarified as well as possible commitments and obligations in other foras, such as the ILO, analysed. The work briefly described above has to be carried out in close cooperation with other international organizations in order to render the work as efficient as possible, as well as to avoid overlapping. Our experience thus far in the field of trade and environment has been encouraging and has shown that good results can be achieved when different interests are appropriately taken into account and work is carried out for the mutual benefit of all participants.

The most urgent of any new tasks for the WTO will no doubt be trade and environment. The Finnish Government will place special emphasis on an efficient and timely implementation of the work programme in this field to be adopted at the Conference. The aim of the work should be to develop the rules of the multilateral trading system so that all necessary measures to protect our common environment can be taken on the national, regional as well as on the international level. Simultaneously, however, such disciplines should be established and strengthened which prevent the misuse of environmental measures as a pretext for protectionism or for creating unnecessary barriers to trade.

In addition, swift implementation of the WTO agreement is of utmost importance. In this respect we should keep in mind the technical problems of developing countries. Sufficient resources should therefore be guaranteed for the technical assistance provided by the GATT.

Let me conclude by thanking His Majesty, King Hassan II, the Moroccan Government and authorities, and the people of Morocco for the great hospitality and excellent organization of this Conference.