

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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AUSTRALIA

**Statement by the Hon. Bob McMullan
Minister for Trade**

I too want to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman and to record my delegation's appreciation for the excellent hospitality we have received in Marrakesh from the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco.

We meet here to conclude the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. To celebrate the attainment of a more equitable and effective international trading system. To welcome the contribution to a more open trading environment in goods and services that the Round has delivered. This is an historic achievement and the Australian Government and people welcome it.

In reaching this outcome, I want to record Australia's particular appreciation to Arthur Dunkel and Peter Sutherland for their vision and their leadership, to the GATT Secretariat for the extraordinary effort so many made over such a long period, and finally to the negotiators from all participants who made such sustained efforts over such a long time and frequently over great distances.

The Agreements which we are adopting here in Marrakesh will result in significant trade liberalization which will assist all countries to grow and develop more strongly. This means more jobs and more opportunities for all our people. The domestic economic and trade reforms which have been taking place in a large number of participating countries during the course of the Uruguay Round will be reinforced by this result.

For the record, on this occasion it is worth reiterating the highlights of the results.

Agriculture and textiles have been brought more effectively within the rules. The largest ever tariff cuts on industrial products have been achieved. New rules for the protection of intellectual property have been established. Groundbreaking rules for trade in services have been negotiated. We have improved rules touching virtually all aspects of trade and secured more automatic dispute settlement procedures.

The birth of the World Trade Organization symbolizes the newly upgraded and invigorated multilateral system. All significant trading countries will have undertaken a substantively higher level of bound commitments. There has been very active participation by all developing countries in the process. Finally, the Round has resulted in an agreement in a single undertaking subscribed to by more than 120 participants.

In sum, this is an international agreement of vast proportions which carries within it great potential for improved economic growth and welfare.

This potential runs across all aspects of the Round outcome. Of particular significance to Australia given our role within the Cairns Group, are the benefits which will derive from the agriculture package.

A good start has been made to improving access and correcting the trade distorting domestic support and export subsidy policies that have so comprehensively disrupted trade in agriculture in the past. Moreover we now have a framework which will have a positive effect on the way future agricultural trade policies are developed.

Of course our task on agricultural reform is unfinished. The cause of achieving further agricultural reforms, trade liberalization and reductions of distortions needs to continue. And we in the Cairns Group will be vigilant to see that the reforms so hard won to date are implemented and all commitments met on schedule.

Cairns Group Ministers met together in Marrakesh only yesterday. Those present authorized me as Chairman of the Group to announce that we have unanimously resolved to continue the Group's existence and to continue our efforts to further pursue the process of agricultural reform in the years ahead. We will be meeting to discuss our future work programme in Montevideo, Uruguay next month.

At a time of celebration of what has been achieved in the Uruguay Round, it is also proper that the international trading community look forward to the challenges and tasks which lie ahead.

Obviously, our first task is to ensure that the Round outcome is implemented quickly - preferably from January 1995. We look to major participants to ensure that their ratification procedures are completed in sufficient time to make this possible.

Clearly, a high priority in the period immediately following establishment of the WTO will be the implementation of commitments. We will all need to ensure that the new rules and expanded obligations are consolidated and that we make the proper adjustments which flow from them. The new multilateral rules and now more effective dispute settlement procedures remove any excuse for unilateral or discriminatory action in the trade field. Furthermore, the post-Round negotiations on financial services, telecommunications and maritime - in which Australia will be actively participating - will allow countries to improve their existing offers and to address issues still in contention.

In addition, a range of proposals have been made for possible international action on the so-called new trade agenda issues and given the legitimate concerns that exist in many of these areas, a consensus needs to be developed on whether and to what extent the issues are properly able to be dealt with under the WTO.

For example, contracting parties of the GATT in its remaining life, and WTO members, have accepted the responsibility of balancing a commitment to continuing trade liberalization and protection of the environment. Australia is pleased with the Decision reached on trade and environmental issues and the balanced approach adopted by contracting parties is reaching this outcome. In Australia's view, cooperative multilateral endeavour will bring faster and more lasting results as has been demonstrated throughout these negotiations.

Similarly, we expect a balanced, sensitive approach will be adopted to the discussion of other issues - trade and competition policy, trade and labour standards and trade and investment. There are important questions of sovereignty, jurisdiction, effectiveness and competency which deserve careful study and consideration in all these proposed new trade issues.

Above all, the effectiveness of the multilateral rules in maintaining an open world trading system which we have worked so hard over the past decade to strengthen, must not be weakened by the pursuit of policy objectives in any one of these abovementioned new areas; i.e. the legitimate concerns which underpin these issues should not become the excuse for a new round of protectionism.

In the post-Uruguay Round world, there will be an increased focus on regional trade arrangements. Australia is strongly committed to ensuring that regional developments are not simply consistent with, but actively bolster the multilateral trading system. In our own region, Australia applies this approach in its active participation in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

I hope as we stand on the threshold of extending the institution into new fields and possibly new endeavours the strength of the existing GATT, its qualities of consensus, conciliation as well as arbitration, remain with us and importantly keep us focused first and foremost on the economic benefits that freer, more open and non-discriminatory trade can provide for our peoples.

Australia believes the Uruguay Round outcomes lead us solidly in that direction. Australia, which put a great effort into this round of trade negotiations, is pleased to accept the outcomes.

We are also pleased to continue the effort to complete the unfinished tasks. In this context, Australia welcomes the initiative by Singapore in offering to host the first Ministerial meeting of the WTO, which we agree would be appropriate recognition of the importance of the Asia-Pacific's growing importance to world trade.

Consistent with the points I have just made, I pledge my Government's commitment to the World Trade Organization and its objectives.