

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

MTN.TNC/MIN(94)/ST/77
14 April 1994
General Distribution
(UR-94-0225)

Trade Negotiations Committee
Meeting at Ministerial Level
Marrakesh (Morocco), 12-15 April 1994

Original: French

LUXEMBOURG

Statement by H.E. Mr. Georges Wohlfart
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Cooperation

I take this opportunity to thank our Moroccan hosts most warmly for their wonderful welcome to one of the most ancient trading centres on the African Continent, a welcome that has almost made us forget the fierceness of the debate that preceded the adoption of the Final Act, and indeed the difficulties still to come.

Despite often disappointing intermediate results, we are at last in a position to adopt an agreement without precedent in the field of trade liberalization: a general tariff reduction of more than 30 per cent, new rules and disciplines, the inclusion, in particular, of agriculture and services, respect for intellectual property, a new dispute settlement system and, finally, the establishment of the World Trade Organization - all these will help to give international trade a new configuration.

However, the significant results we have obtained in the course of the Uruguay Round should not cause us to forget that our task is not yet complete. The economic crisis and, in particular, the unemployment which affect, in varying degrees, almost all the countries represented here indicate the need for a further strengthening of international cooperation. At the same time, I feel I must point out that the final package of the Uruguay Round, although it brings advantages for every signatory, nevertheless is in various respects imperfect. Thus, I must admit to being disappointed that the agreement on services, and in particular financial services, falls well short of our initial ambitions. The absence of a multilateral agreement on steel is another shortcoming detrimental to the interests of Luxembourg and the European Union.

Finally, it should be pointed out that, although intended to be universal, the Final Act of the Uruguay Round fails to deal or does not deal adequately with a number of topics of major importance for international trade. Examples of these are respect for the environment, the monetary dimension, and the social aspects.

The Rio Conference made us well aware of the ecological problems on a planetary scale. With the establishment of the Committee on Trade and the Environment, the World Trade Organization will have to devote itself to this new important task, while taking care to ensure that protection of the environment does not become a new pretext for unilateral protectionist measures.

The experience gained by the European Union in connection with the implementation of the single market has shown us the importance of the monetary factor in trade: successive devaluations and depreciations of the currencies of a number of our partners have seriously upset the functioning of the market, in so far as the resulting improvements in the competitiveness of some have been highly

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detrimental to others. Consequently, the future World Trade Organization should also take this aspect into account.

On the eve of this Meeting, the social chapter was the subject of discussions in which opposing views were expressed. It is certainly not a question of turning the observance of certain social standards into a protectionist device, but the problems which rightly give our public opinion cause for concern cannot be ignored. They should be tackled by the WTO in close cooperation with other organizations such as the ILO, which has drafted a number of international standards. The prohibition of forced labour and child labour, respect for workers' safety and health, freedom of association for trade unions and the right to strike are basic standards which should be respected, whatever the level of development, since they concern human dignity. The aim of freedom of trade is to improve the economic and social well-being of every country, and especially to further the development of the least advantaged. I am confident that the WTO will approach this question positively.

Our Meeting marks a new era for world trade: over the years, in sometimes difficult circumstances, GATT has succeeded in constructing an open trading system. By pursuing its universal vocation and strengthening multilateralism, the WTO will ensure the continuous expansion of world trade. It is for us to take up this new challenge so that the entry into force of the texts adopted here brings new prospects for the growth of the world economy and contributes to the prosperity and development of all nations.