

ECUADOR

Statement by H.E. Mr. José Luis Ycaza Pazmiño
Minister of Foreign Trade, Industry, Fisheries and Tourism

In my capacity as Minister of Foreign Trade, Industry, Fisheries and Tourism, and as official spokesman of the Government of the Republic of Ecuador at the WTO Third Ministerial Conference, I should like to convey to the Director-General of the WTO and to all those present at this Conference the cordial greetings of the Government and people of Ecuador, confirming our position as a developing country, so that the resolutions adopted at this Third Ministerial Conference will set the agenda for the forthcoming Millennium Round that is to be convened if the Members of the WTO so decide.

In this connection, Ecuador proposes the following basic objectives for the next round of negotiations:

To strengthen access conditions for products from developing countries, with complete elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers. The negotiations should cover special and differential treatment provisions for agricultural products- and textiles-exporting countries, with the removal of quotas and subsidies maintained by the developed countries, since countries cannot all be treated in the same way, something that would widen the extreme differences that exist between rich and poor States.

To relate special and differential treatment, one of the major subjects in the negotiating processes, to the subjects of opening up trade that pertain to development financing particularly to favour increased exportable supply by the developing countries so that they can avail themselves of the benefits of trade liberalization, the purpose of which goes beyond merely granting time extensions.

To discuss, calmly and objectively, the topic of agriculture, which is highly sensitive because of its potential economic and social impact in the light of the results achieved through the Agreement on Agriculture and Committee on Agriculture, particularly in regard to State aid not regulated by the Agreement on Agriculture, thereby circumventing the Uruguay Round disciplines, which causes serious injury to agricultural-export countries, whose products are prevented from obtaining access to protected markets. It is therefore essential to impose the strictest of disciplines on the administration of the green, amber and blue boxes, on aggregate measures of support (AMS) and on quotas. The European Union's banana import regime is a clear example of quotas, which, under the protection of the WTO rules, is used discretionally to discriminate against Latin American bananas.

To review the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures to secure better implementation, above all in harmonization, equivalence, risk assessment and adaptation to

pest- and disease-free regions. Accordingly it is vitally important to obtain technical assistance from specialized international bodies to apply the Agreement's disciplines.

To strengthen the bases of the multilateral trading system to achieve the goals of growth and development for the peoples of the poorest countries and avoiding the resurgence of protectionism.

To improve the rules of the game and promote better integration at the subregional, regional and world level, particularly for disadvantaged countries.

To strengthen the dispute settlement system by streamlining procedures and thereby preventing the decisions by panels dealing with complaints for incompletion from becoming mere pious wishes.

To increase non-refundable loans by international financing bodies to implement technical assistance programmes in developing countries, so that these countries regarded as least developed can train people in the private and public sectors, modify their trade policy legislation and institutional organization so as to better cope with the challenges of globalization of the economy and international competition.

To undertake that the trade policy mechanisms known as the Generalized System of Preferences and Andean Preferences Act, which the developed and transition economy countries grant to developing countries, will cover the whole of exportable supply, particularly from the agricultural sector, which is the major component of exportable supply.

To contribute urgently to solving the serious problems facing developing countries as a result of excessive external debt, which has led many countries like Ecuador to recognize their limitations in paying the interest on debt towards particular governments.

To reaffirm that, in regard to intellectual property rights, the proposals made by developing countries are consistent and backed by substantive arguments. For this reason, we call for international recognition of the traditional knowledge of our communities and expressions of their folklore.

It is essential for the international community to acknowledge that, in the past decade, a large number of developing countries like Ecuador have become part of the multilateral trading system, making enormous efforts to cut tariffs, dismantle trade barriers and open their markets up to international competition, on the understanding that trade liberalization would promote efficiency, competitiveness and a greater flow of investment to the countries that stand in greatest need of resources.

It should also be emphasized that, despite the substantial contribution to trade liberalization, the developing countries are still facing increasing marginalization and unequal redistribution of the benefits of increased world trade, since protectionist barriers and high tariffs persist, particularly in developed countries.

Lastly, Ecuador is convinced of the need to establish international rules to regulate exchanges in so-called new subjects such as investment, competition, trade facilitation, tariff negotiations on non-agricultural products, trade and the environment, technical barriers to trade, anti-dumping, countervailing duties and safeguards, among others, bearing in mind that the subjects in question should be negotiated in the light of the interests and asymmetries of the developing countries.