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Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time before this august assembly I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you upon your election to the chairmanship of this crucial meeting. My delegation wishes you every success in steering and guiding the Ministerial part of the thirty-eighth session of the GATT CONTRACTING PARTIES.

We are meeting at a time of severe economic difficulties in all our economies. Since the early 1970s the world economies have been faced with sharp declines in investment and low levels of employment. Interest rates charged to borrowers have risen and remained at very high levels. There have been uncertainties about the future availability and prices of energy. There have also been serious problems of inflation in the market economies and these problems in turn have led to serious irregularities in the price structures of many of our products. There have been problems relating to exchange rates. We in the less-developed countries have been faced with alarmingly adverse terms of trade with respect to our exports. All these problems and others that I have not specifically mentioned do not only lead to economic hardships in our countries, but they also threaten to break the very fabric of our societies. A hungry stomach is very stubborn and is a serious liability and danger to democracy. With the prevailing economic crisis and inequalities, many countries are threatened with the pervading danger of political instability. GATT as a system cannot function in the absence of political stability in its member States.

The economic problems of the less-developed members of GATT in our present era are accentuated by the fact that most of their economies are dependent upon a limited number or range of export products. For this reason, therefore, our economies' performance fluctuates with the fortunes of the world economy.

For us in the developing countries, with fragile economies, the problems enumerated above mean that we are unable to obtain sufficient and timely investment assistance to finance our development projects. We are less able, with the relatively low and declining levels of export earnings, to import more capital goods, machinery, equipment and other manufactured

commodities from those of our more developed partners. In the final analysis however, this also means that our partners' export market is narrowed, hence they too have to produce less and, consequently, they have to lay off workers in some of their industries and factories. It is, therefore, in the best interest of us all to liberalize trade as this will lead to increased commercial activities and the expansion of the economies. The lesson to be learnt here is that all of us must export or else we perish! There are here mutual obligations and benefits.

This conference, therefore, should not lose this excellent opportunity in taking the necessary action which would have the effect of reversing current dangerous trends in the international trade. The past experiences should help all trading nations represented here to reach decisions which would promote the interests of all countries.

My delegation wishes to join other delegations that have spoken before me in underlining our reaffirmation of commitment to the principles and objectives of free trade that are enshrined in the GATT. We feel that the present structures and trends towards protectionism in international trade should not be allowed to continue, otherwise the present inequalities in international trade will lead to disastrous consequences, especially among the developing countries.

This brings me to the question of finance as it relates to the issues of trade and development. Part IV of the General Agreement lays down the basic principles and objectives in which the governments of developed countries and the international financial institutions have an obligation to assist the less-developed countries in their endeavours to promote the development potential and to facilitate access to export markets for the products of their industries.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the provisions contained in Article XXXVI, paragraphs 6, in which it is provided that, "... because of chronic deficiency in the export proceeds and other foreign exchange earnings of less-developed contracting parties, there are important interrelationships between trade and financial assistance to development. There is, therefore, need for increased access in the largest possible measure to the markets under favourable conditions for processed and manufactured products currently or potentially of particular export interest to less-developed contracting parties". I would further like to refer to Article XXXVIII, paragraph 2(c) which stipulates that CONTRACTING PARTIES "...shall collaborate in analyzing the development plans and policies of individual less-developed contracting parties and in examining trade and aid relationships with a view to devising concrete measures to promote the development of export potential and to facilitate access to export markets for the products of the industries thus developed and, in

this connection, seek appropriate collaboration with organizations, and in particular with organizations having competence in relation to financial assistance for economic development, in systematic studies of trade and aid relationships in individual less-developed contracting parties aimed at obtaining a clear analysis of export potential, market prospects and any further action that may be required".

I have, in my intervention, quoted somewhat at length the parts of the provisions contained in Part IV of the General Agreement and concerning technical and financial assistance measures to the less-developed contracting parties. My intention in making these references is to draw the attention of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to the urgent need to implement these and other relevant provisions of the Agreement. In my view the very survival of most developing countries greatly depends upon the full implementation of these provisions. The capacity to export and to sustain a reasonable volume of external trade by developing countries should be expanded and strengthened through the adoption of appropriate measures.

My colleagues from less-developed countries who have taken the floor before me have very ably analyzed the very adverse effects that protectionist measures instituted by the developed countries against some of our export products on our already weak economies. It is therefore not my intention to repeat what they have stated, except to re-emphasize on the aspect of the negative effects on our economies that arise when investors and other lending institutions are uncertain about the direction of the future economic trends. We all know that international financial institutions will only invest or lend out their money if they are assured of reasonable returns on their capital. It is also a well-known fact that less-developed contracting parties desperately need development assistance to enable them effectively to back up their development objectives and targets. In this respect, however, their efforts aimed at national, sub-regional and regional self-sufficiency and self-reliance within the context of economic co-operation among developing countries are thwarted and frustrated by the non-availability of development finance, in view of the fact that the current economic crisis has tended to make the financial lending houses less accommodating towards the problems, needs, and aspirations of the developing countries. Consequently efforts to build a strong economic base by the less-developed countries are largely undermined.

I would now like to conclude my intervention by thanking first of all the Director-General of GATT, Mr. Arthur Dunkel, and his staff for the commendable and selfless service that they have rendered and continued to render to GATT.

My statement would be incomplete if I were not to express my delegations's sincere gratitude to the host Swiss Government and to acknowledge the traditional warm hospitality of the Swiss people that makes us feel so much at home.