

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

Spec(82)157
November 1982

CONTRACTING PARTIES
Thirty-Eighth Session
Ministerial Meeting
(24-27 November 1982)

Original: English

STATEMENT BY MR. FAISAL YOUSEF MAHYOUB,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, EXPORT PROMOTION DEPARTMENT OF SUDAN

This ministerial level meeting is taking place at a critical time in the international economic setting. The multilateral trading system is seriously endangered by the current crisis of the world economy where protectionist pressures have increased and levels of production and trade were largely depressed.

Developing countries are facing critical problems and the least developed among them are the ones which are more seriously affected. For almost half of them GDPs and per capita income were lower in real terms in 1980 than in 1970. The most recent estimates in 1981 show that the growth in LDCs has decelerated.

The trade situation of those countries is particularly alarming. On the basis of data currently available, their trade deficit with developed regions continued to grow in 1981. Already in 1980 growth of their exports had lagged considerably behind that of their imports, and their trade deficit increased to nearly \$8 billion.

The main factors behind this unfavourable development in export earnings of LDCs stemmed from an almost general decline in the prices of exports and slow growth in export volumes. These negative trends continued in 1982 coupled with other difficulties in the other fields of economic and social settings.

In view of those difficulties the world community is called for to ensure that a special treatment for the LDCs in the context of differential and more favourable treatment is fulfilled in order to ameliorate the grave economic situation for those countries.

It is noted with regret that although a year has already elapsed since the Paris Conference and the adoption of the SNPA the economic situation of LDCs continues to be very bleak and the implementation of the SNPA is not satisfactory.

We urge donor countries to expedite implementing their commitments of ODA (official development assistance) for the purpose of implementing the SNPA.

./.

In the trade fields we urge contracting parties of GATT to pursue actions towards facilitating trade of LDCs and reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers to their exports which may contain among other measures the following:

Firstly, further improving GSP or m.f.n. treatment for products of particular interest to LDCs with the objective of providing fullest free access of such products.

Secondly, using of more flexible requirements for rules of origin for products of particular interest to LDCs.

Thirdly, eliminating non-tariff measures affecting products of particular interest to LDCs.

Fourthly, strengthening the technical assistance facilities of the GATT secretariat targeted to the special requirements of LDCs. In this respect, considering the strategic and the important rôle of ITC in providing technical assistance to developing countries, especially LDCs, in their effort to promote their exports, we should like to ask for greater support and more enforcement for the activities of this Centre.

In conclusion, we hope that this conference would succeed in reinforcing the confidence of the GATT system to provide a stable and predictable trading environment and respond to new challenges.