

URUGUAY ROUND

RONDA DE NEGOCIACIONES COMERCIALES MULTILATERALES

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"URUGUAY ROUND MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS HAVE RESTARTED TODAY IN GENEVA"

The conclusion of the Round is the acid test of world leadership - says Peter Sutherland

"The key message is that the Uruguay Round multilateral negotiations have restarted today in Geneva," said Peter Sutherland, Chairman of the Trade Negotiations Committee, which met today (14 July) formally to re-launch the multilateral trade negotiations.

Referring to progress in market access negotiations which was announced by the EC, US, Japan and Canada on the eve of the Tokyo Economic Summit on 7 July, Mr. Sutherland told a press conference: "This has been a very positive result which clearly signalled an intent to put the conclusion of the Uruguay Round to the forefront of the political agenda during the coming months. The conclusion of the Round is now an acid test of world leadership."

Paying tribute to the negotiators in Tokyo, Mr. Sutherland acknowledged the extent to which the leaders of the G7 engaged themselves personally in the process. "I believe it marks a substantial shift from commitment in words, which we have seen in previous summits, to commitment in action. A successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round is a matter of vital interest for all participants in the world trading system and has particular importance for developing countries."

Mr. Sutherland also emphasized that the negotiations had now moved into a multilateral context. "All participants must now get their best offers onto the table in the immediate coming weeks," he urged. "We have to ensure that nobody holds back. In this context, I would encourage delegations - and that includes the Quad countries - to put forward additional offers on a conditional basis. In other words, concessions should be tabled on the basis that others are

expected to make concessions in order to bring about a satisfactory conclusion. In that way we can enhance transparency and gather all the elements essential to bring the Round to a successful conclusion in good time.

"Beginning this afternoon, the Market Access Negotiating Group will meet to review the state of the negotiations in the light of the most recent developments and to establish a work programme, thus providing a multilateral framework for the round of bilateral and plurilateral discussions that has already begun. Apart from the specific matters covered in Tokyo, other important aspects will also require focus in the coming period, including agriculture and textiles.

"Tomorrow morning (15 July), there will be an informal meeting of the Group of Negotiations on Services to consider recent developments, to establish a work programme and to advance progress in a number of areas.

"I intend to convene another meeting of the TNC on Wednesday 28 July, at which we might review the progress achieved and have a first discussion on the Autumn work programme which will also have to include the remaining tracks of the negotiations.

"I envisage that the Secretariat and delegations in capitals will find it useful during the month of August to prepare carefully for an intensive Autumn programme. And, to maintain the momentum, I believe we should have a further TNC meeting at the end of August at which we would identify the critical path items that are necessary to enable us to complete the Round by mid-December."

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