

URUGUAY ROUND

OF MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

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3 December 1993

Joint Meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee and the Group of Negotiations on Goods

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The Trade Negotiations Committee and the Group of Negotiations on Goods met on 3 December 1993. The following is the opening statement by the Chairman, Mr. Peter Sutherland.

This special joint meeting of the TNC and the GNG has a twofold purpose: Firstly, we will be conducting the evaluation of the results to date of the Uruguay Round as anticipated in the Punta del Este Declaration [last paragraph of section G]; the format of our special joint meeting is intended to enable participants to address all aspects of the Round in their contributions to the debate. Secondly, the meeting provides an opportunity to review where we stand in the negotiations with 12 days to go before December 15.

Before we start our discussions on the evaluation, I should like to comment on the meeting in Brussels this week between the United States and the European Union. The information available to me on the meeting suggests that the real progress which they have indicated can lead to concrete and specific results which they hope to be in a position to announce next Monday. I welcome that but they must rapidly complete their agreement. I am satisfied that they both also recognise that an agreement between them will represent only part, albeit an important part, of the final effort to bring the Uruguay Round to a successful conclusion. I have indicated that they must at the earliest possible opportunity report here in Geneva on the results achieved and negotiate further with over 100 other participants whose interests must also be assured and accommodated. Time is of the essence and every moment from now on must be used to maximum effect to communicate and negotiate among all participants. I wish to underline yet again the multilateral nature of the process. Not only is "nothing agreed until everything is agreed" but agreement must also extend to the other participants in the Round and not just to the major trading partners. In particular, let me stress the responsibility of the system

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to the developing countries, particularly those that have undertaken autonomous reform measures. The securing of agreement among the majors is the solution to one part of the equation. It is decidedly not, however, the only part.

Turning to the evaluation, I would like to stress that the evaluation is first and foremost the collective responsibility of the participants in the negotiations.

Nonetheless, at the request of a number of participants, the Secretariat has circulated a factual background paper in order to provide participants with information to enable them to prepare for their debate with their trading partners. I would like to make the following comments about the Secretariat paper. It covers two principal areas: first, market access in the area of goods and services; and second, the proposed new rules, procedures, and institutional arrangements, including an indication where special and differential treatment can apply to developing countries. The paper is based upon the information available as of November 19 in the area of market access. It does not, of course, analyse the contents of individual requests and offers or the specific benefits for individual countries or groups. Moreover, although the state of many offers and the draft texts represents the state of play as of November 19, we are, as you know, dealing with a moving target. In particular, intensive market access negotiations are still underway and I hope that further improvements will be possible in addition to the results already on the table.

The Secretariat paper, however, is not the focus of this debate. Your dialogue with each other is the important purpose of the meeting. Indeed, each of you individually will have a far clearer picture of the extent to which your specific offers to your trading partners have met their concerns. You will also have an even clearer picture of the extent to which the specific offers of your trading partners to you respond to your interests. You will also have the keenest appreciation of how the overall results of the Round depend from your point of view on resolution of the key outstanding issues. In order to be an effective contribution to the closing stages of the Round, I would urge participants to be as realistic and specific as possible both as regards the extent to which you believe you have met the requests of others as well as your expectations in the areas of interest to you. This debate thus represents an opportunity to explain your perception of how you have specifically met the concerns of your trading partners and to identify realistically the specific areas of importance to you where it might be feasible for your trading partners to make a further effort in the final week of the Round.

Before offering the floor, I would like to remind delegations that the general "rules of engagement" of the TNC apply to this meeting. I would therefore request delegations to be brief and to the point; to address in a single intervention their concerns with regard to any aspect of the Round; and to avoid repetition of general points which have been made adequately by others, especially by delegations acting as spokesmen on behalf of country groups.

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