

19 February 2001

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Jorge Iván Mora Godoy, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Cuba, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, at the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services and Commodities

Distinguished delegates,

1. The Group of 77 and China consider this session of the Commission to be of crucial importance to UNCTAD. It will consider the Outcomes of four expert meetings which deal with items which are both central elements of the UNCTAD's mandate as set out in the Bangkok Plan of Action, as well as constituting key issues on the international trade agenda and subject to intensive multilateral negotiation or review in the WTO. Our success in dealing with these matters will be a test of the political will of the members to effectively implement this mandate.
2. Our general view is that the expert meetings were very successful. They enabled us to obtain expert advice on matters which are subject to, or affected by negotiations in multilateral trade fora. The transmission of the experience of the experts, of their very real problems and opportunities, as incorporated in the Outcomes of the meetings, has assisted many delegations in designing more effective and realistic negotiating proposals. These proposals, if accepted, will provide greatly improved export opportunities for the exporters of developing countries, as well as dealing with a variety of other social and economic issues.
3. I would wish to make a series of general comments applicable to the four expert meetings, and then address the peculiar aspects of each.
4. First, each of the Outcomes contains a set of recommendations to UNCTAD to carry out further work on these issues. The Group of 77 and China endorses all such recommendations in the text of the Outcomes, as they all fit within the Bangkok Plan of Action.
5. Second, we find that many of the Outcomes contain recommendations to the "International Community", particularly the Bretton Woods institutions. We can subscribe to the normal formula that these institutions are "invited" to carry out the actions identified.
6. Third, there are some recommendations to governments, most of which should be easy for all members of this Commission to accept.
7. However, there are a series of recommendations by experts which touch directly upon matters currently the subject of review or negotiation in the WTO. The Group of 77 and China is realistic enough to recognize that these recommendations could never be endorsed at this session of the Commission. We therefore strongly urge all members of the Commission to exercise restraint, and not to indulge in restatements of negotiating positions that they have already presented often and in detail in the WTO. What this Commission should consider is that whether there is any additional work that UNCTAD could carry out that would support these negotiations, with the objective of ensuring that the development aspects of these various issues are effectively included on the international trade agenda. In particular this Commission should support what is highlighted in the Bangkok Plan of Action the role of UNCTAD assisting developing countries in multilateral negotiations in the field of trade. "

8. The Group of 77 and China urge all members of the Commission to adopt a constructive, but realistic approach toward reaching agreed recommendations on these issues. We consider, however, that the expert meetings have already made an important impact by bringing the real problems faced by our traders and producers, to the attention of the trade negotiators.

Thank you very much.