

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1999 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Trade, Environment and Sustainable Development

Paragraph 9(d) of the Geneva Ministerial Declaration

Communication from Cuba

The following communication, dated 9 November 1999, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Cuba.

Introduction

1. The Marrakesh Ministerial Decision on Trade and Environment established the close link between trade, the environment and sustainable development. However, in practice, sustainable development is seen by the developing countries as increasingly threatening and unattainable because of the accelerating pace at which trade is being liberalized without properly implementing the results of the Uruguay Round, in particular the provision on special and differential treatment for the developing countries.
2. The objectives of economic growth and sustainable development can be achieved simultaneously if the basic principles of Agenda 21 and the 1992 Rio Declaration are respected, above all the principles establishing the indispensable requirement to eradicate poverty and the common responsibility for the environment, but differentiated according to levels of development.
3. The continual liberalization of trade in an increasingly interdependent world needs to take place in a context of globalization of solidarity and international cooperation to ensure that the commercial requirements of a non-discriminatory, fair and equitable multilateral trading system provide a true incentive to improve production practices in the developing countries rather than contributing to a deterioration in the environmental and living conditions in those countries.
4. The funds currently provided by the developed countries for international cooperation are not sufficient to finance the recovery of the productive and competitive capacity of the developing and vulnerable economies which have been damaged by neo-liberal globalization. Nor have the developing countries been able to obtain the financial resources provided for by the international community to implement the activities set out in Agenda 21.
5. The generation of wealth and the elimination of poverty are part of the solution to the problems of the environment in the developing countries, and depend heavily on market access opportunities for their exports. The trade restrictions imposed on various products for environmental purposes and the need to incorporate production methods and processes in the final product seriously limit market access for the developing countries.

6. Environmentally sustainable development in the developing countries also calls for effective ways of disseminating and transferring environmentally clean technologies.

Proposals

7. The Ministers should give importance to the following elements and take them into account for the future work of the WTO.

8. The Committee on Trade and Environment, whenever it conducts an analysis, should consider, *inter alia*, the consequences for the sustainable development of the developing countries as the only way of ensuring their economic growth coupled with better environmental protection.

9. The Committees on Market Access and Technical Barriers to Trade shall contribute to achieving sustainable development as one of the objectives of the WTO by ensuring that no unnecessary barriers are imposed or unilateral measures taken in the name of environmental protection which affect market access by the developing countries. In this context, the requirement to incorporate production methods and processes in the final product shall be considered unacceptable.

10. The proposed working group on transfer of technology should consider effective ways for developing countries to have access to environmentally clean technologies, thereby contributing to their sustainable development.

11. The Committee on Trade and Development, in coordination with the Committee on Trade and Environment, should evaluate the type of technical assistance required by the developing countries in order to fulfil specific objectives aimed at ensuring their economic growth and the elimination of poverty as essential factors in achieving sustainable development, so that specific technical cooperation funds can be allocated to that end.
