

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

SANTIAGO MEETING OF CAIRNS GROUP MINISTERS

6 July 1990

1. Ministers and representatives of the Cairns Group (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Fiji, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, New Zealand, Thailand and Uruguay) met in Santiago de Chile from July 4-6 1990. Poland attended the meeting and participated in all the working sessions as an observer. Observers from the European Community and the United States also attended the public sessions.
2. The Ministers were honoured by the presence of the President of Chile, Don Patricio Aylwin A., who addressed the meeting.
3. Ministers expressed deep concern at the slow progress in the agriculture negotiations, and, with only five months of the Uruguay Round remaining, Ministers stressed the danger of a crisis developing from the failure of others to move the negotiations forward. They urged the major industrial countries to commit themselves to an ambitious and comprehensive agricultural reform package so as to allow an acceptable framework to be agreed at the meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee in Geneva in the week beginning 23 July.
4. Ministers noted the major economic restructuring efforts and trade liberalising programs being implemented by many countries in Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Asia/Pacific region. Ministers called upon the industrialised countries to recognise that a successful outcome to the Uruguay Round, including significant agricultural reform and trade liberalisation, is critical to the continuation of this trend.
5. Ministers stressed that participants at the Summit of major industrialised countries meeting in Houston from 9-11 July would need to ensure that the Uruguay Round, especially agriculture, was given top priority.
6. In this regard, Ministers welcomed the overall thrust of the proposal for an agriculture "profile" put forward recently by the Chairman of the Uruguay Round Agriculture Negotiating Group. In particular, they welcomed the fact that his text called for specific commitments on the four essential elements; namely internal support, border protection, export competition, and sanitary and phytosanitary provisions. Ministers agree on the importance of strengthening GATT rules and disciplines and making them operationally effective.
7. Ministers welcomed the emphasis in the Chairman's text on market access liberalisation being provided through the conversion of non tariff measures to tariffs and the subsequent reduction of existing and converted tariff barriers. In this context, Ministers reiterated that the concept of re-balancing involving sustained or increased levels of protection and trade distortion for any