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**International Conference on
Uruguay Round and African Economies**

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**Tunis, Tunisia
27 octobre 1994**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENTS BY AFRICAN
COUNTRIES: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION**

**ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLICATIONS
OF THE URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENTS ON AFRICA**

- TUNIS: 27 OCTOBER 1994

**The Implementation of the Uruguay Agreements
By African Countries: A framework for Action**

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of the Uruguay Round on Africa**

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The African Ministers of Trade met in Tunis on 27 October 1994 to review the results of the Uruguay Round and their implications on the African economies and the technical assistance requirements to enable them to respond to the challenges posed by their implementation.

The Ministers underscored that the Uruguay Round has produced the greatest package of trade agreements ever achieved in all previous GATT Rounds with regard to its scope, complexity and impact on the international trade environment involving a higher level of multilateral disciplines than they had to face before. At the same time, they have to identify and take advantage of the opportunities that the post-Uruguay Round trading system has to offer. But in order to be able to meet the challenges of a higher level of multilateral disciplines while at the same time deriving benefits from the system, African countries will require urgent technical assistance to address the immediate and medium/long term adjustment problems as they embark on the implementation of the results of the Uruguay Round.

The African Ministers of Trade have identified the following technical assistance needs with a view to dealing with the various challenges arising from the outcome of the Uruguay Round.

Technical Assistance Requirements

1. African countries will have to adapt to more liberal trading environment, their import regimes will be subject to greater discipline while their margins of preference under the Lome Convention and the GSP will have been eroded.

In this situation, the technical assistance needs identified below must be accompanied by international support measures, such as effective debt relief action, structural adjustment to facilitate their adaptation to this overall competitive situation, financial assistance is required to strengthen and diversify production capacity.

African countries will require assistance in identifying the market opportunities, contained in the Uruguay Round schedules and exploiting them through support to selected sectors, export financing facilities, assistance in trade promotion and establishment of marketing and distribution networks, assistance on conformity with standards and quality control packaging and labelling, assistance in establishing information systems on trade flows and barriers to trade, accessible to both government and the private sector, accompanied by necessary analytical software.

Technical assistance should also be available for the definition of appropriate and feasible measures to compensate African countries for the adverse impact of the erosion of preferences.

2. The Agreement of Agriculture will result in higher prices for imports of essential foodstuffs; it may, however, provide opportunities through the reduction of subsidized competition from countries outside the region.

The Ministerial Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on least Developed and Net Importing Developing Countries provides for food aid in grant form combined with financial and technical assistance for improving agricultural productivity and infrastructure. The implementation of these commitments will be monitored by the WTO Committee on Agriculture. It is essential that these commitments be faithfully implemented.

The concessions and commitments with respect to market access and export subsidization should be studied with a view to identifying opportunities for African countries.

3. The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property rights (TRIPs) provides for higher levels of protection of Intellectual Property rights. African countries will, within the periods specified in the Agreement, have to amend their existing intellectual property laws and

in certain fields enact new ones to conform to the TRIPs Agreement. Financial and technical assistance, including training, will be needed for the establishment or strengthening of the infrastructure required for the implementation of the intellectual property systems.

4. In the light of the extensive liberalization they have undertaken, African countries will find it necessary to make use of the provisions of the Agreements on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures and on Anti-Dumping Duties to protect themselves against unfair trade practices. They will likely also find it necessary to apply the provisions of the Agreement on Safeguards to prevent their domestic industries from injury as a result of the rapid increases in imports.

On the other hand, African countries may also find their exports confronted with such actions in export markets. African countries will require assistance in drawing up legislation and the accompanying institutions to apply these agreements in the national context. This would involve the training of officials, and establishment of information systems on prices and markets. They will also require assistance in acquiring a greater familiarity with the legislation and administrative procedures of their main trading partners with a view to defending more effectively their exporters against restrictive measures.

5. The general Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) has entailed the acceptance of specific sectoral commitments by African countries. They are also participating in the continuing negotiations in the sector of maritime transport, financial services, basic telecommunication services, and with respect to the movement of persons. In addition the Agreements provides for future negotiations within five years.

In order to derive benefits from the GATS, African countries must strengthen their services sectors and their export capacity in services, including technical support in the continuing negotiations and in preparing for future negotiations on trade in services within the framework of GATS and in the context of regional agreements. To this end, African countries will require increased technical assistance to strengthen their analytical and policy making capacity as well as their effective participation.

6. Through the phasing out of the MFA, the agreement on textiles and clothing will expose African exports to intensified competition in world markets. Technical assistance could enable African countries to build upon their comparative advantage in this sector to increase their competitiveness in world markets, including through the improvement of their design capabilities and the transfer of technology.

7. Many of Multilateral Agreements provide for differentiated and more favourable treatment for developing countries and, in particular, for the least developed countries. This treatment usually involves time limited derogations from the more stringent disciplines included in the Agreements.

African countries should undertake the exploration of the policy options involved in deriving full benefits from these provision. This would call for technical assistance, for example in designing strategies to take advantage of the time based derogations.

8. At the Marrakesh Meeting concluding the Uruguay Round, a list of issues was proposed for possible inclusion in the work programme of the WTO and thus candidates for future negotiations.

Technical assistance would be required to assess the possible implications of these new issues for African countries, and in defining an African agenda for future trade negotiations.

9. African countries should accelerate the process of regional cooperation to widen their economic spaces. This would enable their industrial, agricultural and service producers to progressively adapt to increasingly competitive trading environments. They should take steps to enhance the mutual complementarity of their economies.

Technical assistance should be provided to facilitate the process of liberalization within and among regional trading arrangements in Africa, through intra-African negotiations in specific goods and services sectors.

10. The commitments to liberalize access to their markets and the multilateral disciplines with respect to many domestic policy measures may have an adverse impact on certain sectors of the populations of African countries, such as the informal sector.

Technical assistance may be required to appropriately identify which sectors may suffer significantly and to devise appropriate adjustment measures, including through education and training.

11. A prerequisite to the effective setting up of technical assistance programmes in this area would be for each African country to conduct an assessment of the implications of the Uruguay Round Agreements on its national economy and the policy measures and legislation required to effectively respond to the post-Uruguay Round situation.

Priority technical assistance will be required to assist individual African countries as they set out to (i) assess the domestic requirements (legal, administrative) for compliance; (ii) assess the economic impact of the various agreements and the policy implications; and (iii) assess new market access conditions facing their country's trade, including Barriers to trade, Agreement on the Implementation of Article VII (Customs Valuation); Agreement on Preshipment Inspection; Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), Understanding on the Rules of procedures Governing the settlement of Disputes; and the Trade Policy Review Mechanism.

Follow-up Action

In order to ensure the urgent and pressing technical assistance needs of African countries identified above are effectively met, the Ministers call upon all relevant international organizations and agencies, particularly, GATT/WTO, UNCTAD, UNECA, OAU, ITC, IFAD, FAO, CFC, World Bank, ADB, WHO, IDB, WIPO and UNDP to formulate programmes, as a matter of priority and within their respective mandates, oriented to the fulfilment of these requirements.

Ministers emphasized the need for close interagency cooperation within the Inter-agency Task Force for Africa's Development (IATF) so as to ensure the maximum effectiveness of this technical assistance. To this end, the IATF should be convened as soon as possible to define the necessary modalities of coordination in this process.

The financial resources required for carrying out the various technical assistance programmes must be commensurate with the challenges faced by Africa. Therefore, the Ministers invite donor countries and international financial institutions to make such resources available. The Ministers expect that the leading role played by UNDP in providing support to them during the Uruguay Round negotiations would continue in the implementation process.

The Conference calls upon Tunisia, in its role as current chairman of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade, to undertake appropriate action and initiatives in close cooperation with the ECA/OAU/ADB Joint Secretariat and the african economic communities in order to keep all the relevant parties fully informed of the recommendations of the Conference and to ensure its follow-up. The Conference calls upon the WTO, in cooperation with UNCTAD, UNECA, ITC, UNIDO, OAU, FAO, IFAD, CFC, World Bank, ADB, WHO, WIPO, IDB and UNDP to plan, in the context of its proposed internal structures a special mechanism entrusted with (a) sensitizing all contracting parties on the impact of the Uruguay Round Agreement on Africa; and (b) providing technical assistance to the african countries.