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VENEZIA SUMMIT CONFERENCE

Venezia Economic Declaration

Introduction

1. We, the Heads of State or Government of the seven major industrialized countries and the representatives of the European Community, have met in Venice from 8 to 10 June 1987, to review the progress that our countries have made, individually and collectively, in carrying out the policies to which we committed ourselves at earlier Summits. We remain determined to pursue these policies for growth, stability, employment, and prosperity for our own countries and for the world economy.

2. We can look back on a number of positive developments since we met a year ago. Growth is continuing into its fifth consecutive year, albeit at lower rates. Average inflation rates have come down. Interest rates have generally declined. Changes have occurred in relationships among leading currencies which over time will contribute to a more sustainable pattern of current account positions and have brought exchange rates within ranges broadly consistent with economic fundamentals. In volume terms the adjustment of trade flows is under way, although in nominal terms imbalances so far remain too large.

Macroeconomic policies and exchange rates

3. Since Tokyo, the Summit countries have intensified their economic policy coordination with a view to ensuring internal consistency of domestic policies and their international compatibility. This is essential to achieving stronger and sustained global growth, reduced external imbalances and more stable exchange *rate* relationships. Given the policy agreements reached at the Louvre and in Washington, further substantial shifts in exchange rates could prove counterproductive to efforts to increase growth and facilitate adjustment. We reaffirm our commitment to the swift and full implementation of those agreements.

4. We now need to overcome the problems that nevertheless remain in some of our countries: external imbalances that are still large; persistently high unemployment; large public sector deficits; and high levels of real interest rates. There are also continuing trade restrictions and increased protectionist pressures, persistent weakness of many primary commodity markets, and reduced prospects for developing countries to grow, find the markets they need and service their foreign debt.

5. The correction of external imbalances will be a long and difficult process. Exchange rate changes alone will not solve the problem of correcting these imbalances while sustaining growth. Surplus countries will design their policies to strengthen domestic demand, and reduce external surpluses while maintaining price stability. Deficit countries, while following policies designed to encourage steady low-inflation growth, will reduce their fiscal and external imbalances.

6. We call on other industrial countries to participate in the effort to sustain economic activity worldwide. We also call on newly industrialized economies with rapid growth and large external surpluses to assume greater responsibility for preserving an open world trading system by reducing trade barriers and pursuing policies that allow their currencies more

fully to reflect underlying fundamentals.

7. Among the Summit countries, budgetary discipline remains an important medium-term objective and the reduction of existing public sector imbalances a necessity for a number of them. Those Summit countries which have made significant progress in fiscal consolidation and have large external surpluses remain committed to following fiscal and monetary policies designed to strengthen domestic growth, within a framework of medium-term fiscal objectives. Monetary policy should also support non-inflationary growth and foster stability of exchange rates. In view of the outlook for low inflation in many countries, a further market-led decline of interest rates would be helpful.

Structural policies

8. We also agree on the need for effective structural policies especially for creating jobs. To this end we shall:

- promote competition in order to speed up industrial adjustment;
- reduce major imbalances between agricultural supply and demand;
- facilitate job creating investment;
- improve the functioning of labour markets;
- promote the further opening of internal markets;
- encourage the elimination of capital market imperfections and restrictions and the improvement of the functioning of international financial markets.

Multilateral surveillance and policy coordination

9. We warmly welcome the progress achieved by the Group of Seven Finance Ministers in developing and implementing

strengthened arrangements for multilateral surveillance and economic coordination as called for in Tokyo last year. The new process of coordination, involving the use of economic indicators, will enhance efforts to achieve more consistent and mutually compatible policies by our countries.

10. The Heads of State or Government reaffirm the important policy commitments and undertakings adopted at the Louvre and Washington meetings of the Group of Seven, including those relating to exchange rates. They agree that, if in the future world economic growth is insufficient, additional actions will be required to achieve their common objectives. Accordingly, they call on their Finance Ministers to develop, if necessary, additional appropriate policy measures for this purpose and to continue to cooperate closely to foster stability of exchange rates.

11. The coordination of economic policies is an ongoing process which will evolve and become more effective over time. The Heads of State or Government endorse the understandings reached by the Group of Seven Finance Ministers to strengthen, with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the surveillance of their economies using economic indicators including exchange rates, in particular by:

- the commitment by each country to develop medium-term objectives and projections for its economy, and for the group to develop objectives and projections, that are mutually consistent both individually and collectively; and

- the use of performance indicators to review and assess current economic trends and to determine whether there are significant deviations from an intended course that require consideration of remedial actions.

12. The Heads of State or Government consider these measures important steps towards promoting sustained non-inflationary global growth and greater currency stability.

They call upon the Group of Seven Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to:

- intensify their coordination efforts with a view to achieving prompt and effective implementation of the agreed policy undertakings and commitments;
- monitor economic developments closely in cooperation with the Managing Director of the IMF; and
- consider further improvements as appropriate to make the coordination process more effective.

Trade

13. We note rising protectionist pressures with grave concern. The Uruguay Round can play an important role in maintaining and strengthening the multilateral trading system, and achieving increased liberalization of trade for the benefit of all countries. Recognizing the interrelationship among growth, trade and development, it is essential to improve the multilateral system based on the principles and rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and bring about a wider coverage of world trade under agreed, effective and enforceable multilateral discipline. Protectionist actions would be counterproductive, would increase the risk of further exchange rate instability and would exacerbate the problems of development and indebtedness.

14. We endorse fully the commitment to adopt appropriate measures in compliance with the principles of stand-still and rollback which have been reaffirmed in the Ministerial Declaration on the Uruguay Round. It is important to establish in the GATT a multilateral framework of principles and rules for trade in services, trade-related investment measures and intellectual property rights. This extension of the multilateral trading system would also be beneficial to developing countries in fostering growth and enhancing trade, investment and

technology transfers.

15. Basing ourselves on the Ministerial Declaration on the Uruguay Round and on the principles of the GATT, we call on all Contracting Parties to negotiate comprehensively, in good faith and with all due despatch, with a view to ensuring mutual advantage and increased benefits to all participants. Canada, Japan, the United States and the European Community will table a wide range of substantive proposals in Geneva over the coming months. Progress in the Uruguay Round will be kept under close political review. In this context the launching, the conduct and the implementation of the outcome of the negotiations should be treated as parts of a single undertaking; however, agreements reached at an early stage might be implemented on a provisional or definitive basis by agreement prior to the formal conclusion of the negotiations, and should be taken into account in assessing the overall balance of the negotiations.

16. A strong, credible, working GATT is essential to the well-being of all trading countries and is the best bulwark against mounting bilateral protectionist pressures. The functioning of the GATT should be improved through enhancing its role in maintaining an open multilateral system and its ability to manage disputes; and through ensuring better coordination between the GATT and the IMF and the World Bank. We consider that it would be useful to have, as appropriate, in the course of the negotiations, a meeting of the Trade Negotiating Committee at the ministerial level.

Agriculture

17. At Tokyo we recognised the serious nature of the agricultural problem. We agreed that the structure of agricultural production needed to be adjusted in the light of world demand, and expressed our determination to give full support to the work of the OECD in this field. In doing so, we all recognized the importance of agriculture to the well-being of our rural communities. In the past year, we have actively pursued

the approach outlined at Tokyo, and we take satisfaction from the agreement in the Ministerial Declaration adopted in Punta del Este on the objectives for the negotiations on agriculture in the Uruguay Round.

18. We reaffirm our commitment to the important agreement on agriculture set out in the OECD Ministerial communique of May 13, 1987; in particular, the statement of the scope and urgency of the problem which require that a concerted reform of agricultural policies be implemented in a balanced and flexible manner; the assessment of the grave implications, for developed and developing countries alike, of the growing imbalances in supply of and demand for the main agricultural products; the acknowledgment of shared responsibility for the problems as well as for their equitable, effective and durable resolution; the principles of reform and the action required. The long-term objective is to allow market signals to influence the orientation of agricultural production, by way of a progressive and concerted reduction of agricultural support, as well as by all other appropriate means, giving consideration to social and other concerns, such as food security, environmental protection and overall employment.

19. We underscore our commitment to work in concert to achieve the necessary adjustments of agricultural policies, both at home and through comprehensive negotiations in the Uruguay Round. In this as in other fields, we will table comprehensive proposals for negotiations in the coming months to be conducted in accordance with the mandate in the Ministerial Declaration, and we intend to review at our next meeting the progress achieved and the tasks that remain.

20. In the meantime, in order to create a climate of greater confidence which would enhance the prospect for rapid progress in the Uruguay Round as a whole and as a step towards the long-term result to be expected from those negotiations, we have agreed, and call upon other countries to agree, to refrain from actions which, by further stimulating production of

agricultural commodities in surplus, increasing protection or destabilizing world markets, would worsen the negotiating climate and, more generally, damage trade relations.

Developing countries and debt

21. We attach particular importance to fostering stable economic progress in developing countries, with all their diverse situations and needs. The problems of many heavily indebted developing countries are a cause of economic and political concern and can be a threat to political stability in countries with democratic regimes. We salute the courageous efforts of many of these countries to achieve economic growth and stability.

22. We underline the continuing importance of official development assistance and welcome the increased efforts of some of our countries in this respect. *We recall the target already established by international organizations (0,7%) for the future level of official development assistance and we take note that overall financial flows are important to development.* We strongly support the activities of international financial institutions, including those regional development banks which foster policy reforms by borrowers and finance their programmes of structural adjustment. In particular:

- we support the central role of the IMF through its advice and financing and encourage closer cooperation between the IMF and the World Bank, especially in their structural adjustment lending;
- we note with satisfaction the contribution made by the Eighth replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA);
- we support a general capital increase of the World Bank when justified by increased demand for quality lending, by its expanded role in the debt strategy and by the necessity to maintain the financial stability of the institution;

- *In the light of the different contributions of our countries to official development assistance*, we welcome the *recent* initiative of the Japanese government in bringing forward a new scheme which will increase the provision of resources from Japan to developing countries.

23. For the major middle-income debtors, we continue to support the present growth-oriented case-by-case strategy. Three elements are needed to strengthen the growth prospects of debtor countries: the adoption of comprehensive macroeconomic and structural reforms by debtor countries themselves; the enhancement of lending by international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank; and adequate commercial bank lending in support of debtor country reforms. We shall play our part by helping to sustain growth and expand trade. A number of debt agreements have allowed some resumption of growth, correction of imbalances, and significant progress in restoring the creditworthiness of some countries. But some still lack adequate policies for structural adjustment and growth designed to encourage the efficient use of domestic savings, the repatriation of flight capital, increased flows of foreign direct investment, and in particular reforms of financial markets.

24. There is equally a need for timely and effective mobilization of lending by commercial banks. In this context, we support efforts by commercial banks and debtor countries to develop a "menu" of alternative negotiating procedures and financing techniques for providing continuing support to debtor countries.

25. Measures should be taken, particularly by debtor countries, to facilitate non-debt-creating capital flows, especially direct investment. In this connection, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) should begin to serve its objectives as soon as possible. It is important to maintain flexibility on the part of export credit agencies in promptly resuming or increasing cover for countries that are implementing comprehensive adjustment programmes.

26. We recognize the problems of developing countries whose economies are solely or predominantly dependent on exports of primary commodities the prices of which are persistently depressed. It is important that the functioning of commodity markets should be improved, for example through better information and greater transparency. Further diversification of these economies should be encouraged, with the help of the international financial institutions, through policies to support their efforts for improved processing of their products, to expand opportunities through market access liberalization, and to strengthen the international environment for structural change.

27. We recognize that the problems of some of the poorest countries, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa, are uniquely difficult and need special treatment. These countries are characterized by such features as acute poverty, limited resources to invest in their own development, unmanageable debt burdens, heavy reliance on one or two commodities, and the fact that their debt is owed for the most part to governments of industrialized countries themselves or to international financial institutions. For those of the poorest countries that are undertaking adjustment effort, consideration should be given to the possibility of applying lower interest rates to their existing debt, and agreement should be reached, especially in the Paris Club, on longer repayment and grace periods to ease the debt service burden. We welcome the various proposals made in this area by some of us and also the proposal by the Managing Director of the IMF for a significant increase in the resources of the Structural Adjustment Facility over the three years from January 1, 1988. We urge a conclusion on discussions on these proposals *within this year*.

28. We note that UNCTAD VII provides an opportunity for a discussion with developing countries with a view to arriving at a common perception of the major problems and policy issues in the world economy.

Environment

29. Further to our previous commitment to preserve a healthy environment and to pass it on to future generations, we welcome the report by the environment experts on the improvement and harmonization of techniques and practices of environmental measurement. Accordingly, we encourage the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to institute a forum for information exchange and consultation in cooperation with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Council of Scientific Union (ICSU), assisted by other interested international organizations and countries, so that continuing progress in this important field can be ensured. The priority environmental problems identified by the environment experts in their report should receive full attention.

30. We underline our own responsibility to encourage efforts to tackle effectively environmental problems of worldwide impact such as stratospheric ozone depletion, climate change, acid rains, endangered species, hazardous substances, air and water pollution, and destruction of tropical forests. We also intend to examine further environmental issues such as stringent environmental standards as an incentive for innovation and for the development of clean, cost-effective and low-resource technology as well as promotion of international trade in low-pollution products, low-polluting industrial plants and other environmental protection technologies.

31. We welcome the important progress achieved since Tokyo, particularly in the International Atomic Energy Agency, in enhancing effective international cooperation, with regard to safety in the management of nuclear energy.

Other issues

32. We welcome the initiative of the Human Frontier Science Programme presented by Japan, which is aimed at promoting, through international cooperation, basic research on biological

functions. We are grateful for the informal opportunities our scientists have had to take part in some of the discussions of the feasibility study undertaken by Japan. We note that this study will be continued and we would be pleased to be kept informed about its progress.

33. We welcome the positive contribution made by the Conference of High Level Experts on the future role of education in our society, held in Kyoto in January 1987.

34. We shall continue to review the ethical implications of developments in the life sciences. Following the Conferences sponsored by Summit governments - by Japan in 1984, by France in 1985, by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1986 and by Canada in 1987 - we welcome the Italian government's offer to host the next bioethics Conference in Italy in April, 1988.

Next Economic Summit

35. We have agreed to meet again next year and have accepted the invitation of the Canadian Prime Minister to meet in Canada.

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