

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1064

ANSWERED ON:23.11.2001

MEETING OF COMMERCE SECRETARIES OF SAARC

GANGASANDRA SIDDAPPA BASAVARAJ;GOWDAR MALLIKARJUNAPPA;IQBAL AHMED SARADGI

**Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Commerce Secretaries of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation ( SAARC ) at a meeting held in the month of August, 2001 expressed deep concern over the attempts of developed countries to expand the trade agenda for WTO;

(b) if so, whether all the participants have agreed that it was essential that obligations already entered into be fulfilled in the first instance before taking on fresh commitments and obligations;

(c) if so, whether they have recommended that the ongoing consultations in Geneva by the SAARC ambassadors to WTO be intensified to include other likeminded countries and also to ensure that the agenda for the fourth WTO ministerial conference be agreed to without further delay; and

(d) if so, the efforts that are being made by the SAARC countries particularly by India on this issue?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ( SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY )

(a) & ( b ) : The Commerce Secretaries of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region met on 22nd August 2001 at New Delhi to formulate a coordinated strategy of SAARC countries on multilateral trade issues and submitted a draft of a Joint Statement for consideration of the SAARC Commerce Ministers. The Commerce Secretaries emphasized that Implementation issues are a legacy of the Uruguay Round Agreements and must be resolved upfront without any extraneous linkages.

(c) : The SAARC Commerce Secretaries also recommended to intensify consultations amongst the Ambassadors of SAARC countries at Geneva along with other like minded countries during the preparatory process for the Doha Conference at Geneva. It was also emphasized that the Doha Ministerial Declaration and its mandate should be clear and specific without any scope for ambiguities and there should be no attempt to include new issues into the Declaration at the eleventh hour, which should be prepared on the basis of full prior consultations and consensus.

(d) : The Ambassadors of SAARC countries accredited to the WTO in Geneva and also other Like Minded Group(LMG) of countries were in touch prior to and during the Doha Ministerial Conference and held various informal discussions so as to effectively safeguard their common interests at the WTO.