

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2655

ANSWERED ON:07.03.2003

MINI-MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IN TOKYO

AVSM, BRIG.(RETD.) KAMAKHYA PRASAD SINGH DEO;CHANDRA NATH SINGH;GADDE RAMAMOCHAN;K. MURALEEDHARAN;KAILASH MEGHWAL;M.V.V.S MURTHI;SADASHIVRAO DADOBA MANDLIK;SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL;V. VETRISELVAN

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

- (a) whether a mini-ministerial meeting of WTO has been held in Tokyo recently;
- (b) if so, the details of issues discussed in the meeting;
- (c) whether there was dispute between developed and developing countries on the issue of implementation of decisions of Doha Conference;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the details of issues raised by India in the meeting;
- (f) the countries which have supported India's views in the meeting; and
- (g) the overall outcome of the meeting?

Answer

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

(a) to (g): An informal meeting of about 20 Trade Ministers of Member States of WTO was held in Tokyo at the invitation of Japanese Government from 14-16 February 2003. The Indian delegation was jointly led by Minister of Commerce & Industry and Law & Justice and Minister of Agriculture. The Director General of WTO also attended the informal mini-Ministerial meeting.

This meeting reviewed all major WTO issues under negotiations in the on-going Doha Work Programme, including market access for agricultural and non-agricultural products and services; TRIPS and Public Health; Special and Differential treatment; Implementation-related issues and concerns; Rules; and the four Singapore issues namely the relationship between Trade and Investment; the Interaction between Trade and Competition Policy; Transparency in Government Procurement; and Trade Facilitation.

At this meeting, India forcefully articulated the need to restore the development agenda as the central focus of WTO negotiations, as mandated in the Doha Ministerial Declaration. India strongly expressed its concern over the slow progress in the area of development-related issues such as TRIPS and Public Health; implementation issues and special and differential treatment issues and stated that the success or otherwise of the forthcoming Cancun Ministerial Conference of the WTO in September this year would greatly depend on the resolution of these issues. Participants from many other developing countries such as Brazil, Kenya, Costa Rica, Nigeria, Lesotho and Senegal strongly supported India's statement.

Since agriculture was a priority sector for all countries, India pointed out that satisfactory resolution with respect to distortions in global agricultural trade can take place only if both domestic support and export subsidies were substantially reduced or eliminated in the developed countries. India strongly emphasized the highest priority that it would give to the protection to its farmers and their well being. India also stressed the need for sufficient special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries, such as the use of special safeguard measures to prevent surge in imports. It pointed out the lack of flexibility it had on market access in agriculture.

In respect of non-agricultural products, India strongly advocated increased market access for products of export interest to India such as textiles, leather goods. Expressing strong interest in the services' negotiations, India asked for greater liberalization in the movement of natural persons.

On Singapore issues, India reiterated its stand that these issues did not fall within the purview of WTO which should focus on trade related issues only. In the area of Rules, India called for stronger disciplines in anti-dumping and anti-subsidy so as to ensure that the market access achieved through reduction in tariffs and elimination of non-tariff barriers is not negated through trade defence measures.

Since this was an informal meeting, discussions were in the form of exchange of views of participating countries with no declared outcome. The object was to see how further progress can be made in taking forward the Doha Work Programme by the time of the Fifth Ministerial Conference to be held in Cancun, Mexico this year. The Ministers at this meeting resolved to make a fresh effort to

achieve progress in areas, which are of vital interest to the developing countries.